

**CYCLONE – PROBLEMS OF CONVEYING LINGUISTIC AND
CULTURAL CONTEXTS FROM ONE CULTURE TO ANOTHER**

Trabalho de Projecto de Mestrado em Tradução

Novembro, 2019

WORDS OF THANKS

This section is one that I would particularly like to emphasise, as this work would not have been possible, had it not been for my unremitting supervisor, Professor Karen Bennett. It has been a true privilege to have her guidance, patience and dedication. The talks that we have shared from person to person and not from teacher to student, the whole ‘roller coaster ride’ that remains forever, etc. It was a very fun, interesting and horizon-broadening experience to have been tasked with the translation of *Cyclone: Diary of a Roller Coaster*, as it was my first-ever book of this (and any) genre.

Orfeu Negro is also owed recognition and thanks for having accepted to work with me and for the very professional, yet warm, contact that we have had, be it via e-mail, be it in person. I should definitely like to work with them again sometime.

I would also like to thank my parents: my mother, who has always been there for me, through thick and thin, and has always pushed me to go further and be the best that I could be – not what Society deemed I ought to be. Her endless patience, trust, love and care throughout this whole journey were key. My father, although quieter and resigned, also deserves all the thanks in the world, as he, too, was fundamental

Finally, I also want to extend my thanks to my friends and other family members who have supported me throughout. The laughs, the humour, the friendship and, above all, people’s care is priceless.

RESUMO

CICLONE: DIÁRIO DE UMA MONTANHA-RUSSA

ANTÓNIO CARREIRO BORGES DA COSTA MENDES

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Literatura Infantil, Ilustração, Orfeu Negro, Livros Ilustrados, Iconotexto, Intersemiótica.

Este trabalho tem por objetivo traduzir o texto e refletir acerca das dificuldades encontradas, à luz de teorias de tradução atuais, em *Ciclone: Diário de uma Montanha-Russa* – livro infantil ilustrado, publicado pela editora Orfeu Negro. Trata-se de um livro ilustrado, cujo conteúdo semântico é transmitido tanto pelo texto quanto pelas palavras. Passando também pela análise dos diversos aspetos que definem e enquadram este livro dentro de um ou mais géneros literários específicos, tiveram-se em consideração vários pontos de vista de vários autores e tradutores.

A relação complexa e heterogénea do texto de partida e do texto de chegada é alvo de escrutínio, explicado, assim, o porquê da maneira adotada de se passar uma determinada mensagem, que provém de contexto português, a um público-alvo estrangeiro, de língua inglesa materna ou não.

ABSTRACT

CYCLONE: DIARY OF A ROLLER COASTER

ANTÓNIO CARREIRO BORGES DA COSTA MENDES

KEYWORDS: Children's Literature, Illustration, Orfeu Negro, Illustrated Books, Iconotext, Intersemiotics.

The objective of this work is to translate the text and reflect upon the difficulties encountered, in the light of the current translation theories, in *Cyclone: Diary of a Roller Coaster* – a children's book, published by Orfeu Negro. It is a picture book in which the semantic content is carried as much by the text, as by the words. In order to analyse the various aspects which define and frame this book within one or more specific literary genres, viewpoints of various authors and translators were taken into account.

The complex and heterogeneous relationship between source text and target text and source audience and target audience is placed under scrutiny, using analytic tools to unravel this duality of realities and explain the adopted way to convey a given message that comes from Portuguese context, to a foreign target audience, whose mother tongue may or may not be the English.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| WORDS OF THANKS..... | 2 |
| RESUMO..... | 3 |
| ABSTRACT | 4 |
| INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| CHILDREN’S LITERATURE..... | 9 |
| What is children’s literature? | 9 |
| i. Difficulties about translating children’s literature | 10 |
| ii. Definition of picture books/illustrated books/graphic narratives..... | 11 |
| Translating picture books/illustrated books..... | 15 |
| DESCRIPTION OF CYCLONE: DIARY OF A ROLLER COASTER | 17 |
| COMMENTARY..... | 19 |
| Difficulties of translating Cyclone: Diary of a Rollercoaster | 19 |
| i. Register | 20 |
| ii. Word play | 22 |
| iii. Culturally specific terms | 22 |
| iv. Grammatical issues | 23 |
| v. Culturally specific issues. | 24 |
| vi. Intersemiotics | 25 |
| CONCLUSION | 27 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 29 |
| ANNEX 1 | 31 |
| TRANSLATION | 31 |
| ANNEX 2..... | 63 |
| <i>CYCLONE: DIARY OF A ROLLER COASTER ORIGINAL VERSION.....</i> | 63 |

INTRODUCTION

For the non-curricular component of the master's degree in Translation at the Nova University of Lisbon (FCSH), I hereby present my translation of Inês Barahona and Miguel Fragata's graphic narrative *Ciclone – Diário de uma Montanha-Russa* from Portuguese to English.

The aim of this project is to translate the text and comment on the translation, suggesting and explaining the preferred solutions to translation problems encountered on both cultural as well as linguistic levels. The story revolves around (diary) entries written by four teenagers – two boys and two girls –, between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, in four different periods in time, ranging from the 1970s to the present day.

The Publisher

The publisher, Orfeu Negro, made its debut in 2007 with the title *Performance Art: from Futurism to the Present*, by Rose Lee Goldberg. It has been publishing essays and other documentary works within the scope of contemporary arts. Favouring the mainstreaming of the artistic thinking and the crossing of various territories, it has invested in the areas of dance, drama, cinema, photography, architecture and visual arts.

Regarding picture books, the 'Orfeu Mini' collection was born in 2008. It is a series of illustrated books for both young and old, which favours the album format and intertwines illustration with graphic design, offering the reader innovative stories and objects to think outside the box. In late 2016, the publisher inaugurated *BAOBÁ livraria*, a bookstore specialising in illustrated books in Lisbon.

Orfeu Negro wants this book to be translated into English, as an addition to its range of literary works already available in that language. It is to be marketed both in Portugal and abroad, wherever the Orfeu Mini collection can be found and it is aimed at an audience ranging from 12 to 16 years of age.

Other picture books published by Orfeu Negro that share such a crucial duality between picture and text are *Um Inverno Perfeito* (Cristina Sitja Rubio), *Wild Animals*

of the South (Dieter Braun), *João Timoneiro* (Madalena Moniz), *Here We Are* (Oliver Jeffers), *The Grotlyn* (Benji Davies), among others.

(<https://www.orfeunegro.org/>)

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

What is children's literature?

Children's literature is a branch of literature especially dedicated to children and young adults. In it, fictional stories, biographies, novels, poems, folkloric and cultural works, or simply works containing or explaining facts of real life (i.e.: the arts, science, mathematics, etc.) are included. Naturally, the content within a children's work depends of the reader's age, whereas literary works destined for children ranging from two to four years of age almost always consist of few words and are very colourful and/or decorated with many pictures and photographs. Literary works destined for young adults, however, are usually constituted of text alone.

Since the 18th century, children's literature has had a significant increase, especially during the 20th century. It is a quite broad genre, including picture books, comic books (which are, to this day, a crowd-favourite), fables (which were made famous by Jean de La Fontaine depictions of the tales), poetry and verse, children's theatre, fiction and the subgenres of fantasy and realistic fiction, traditional literature, biographies, etc.

Children's literature grew as the notion of childhood began to be understood as a specific stage of human development. In the Middle Ages, there was no notion of childhood as a period of need for specific and differentiated literary work, which is why there was not really any kind of children's literature. This is not to say that the younger ones were deprived of literary experiences, it just was not defined by such differentiated terms and the adults' ones.

The two main target audiences in children's literature are the children, who want to be entertained and possibly even read to, and adults, such as parents, teachers, scholars, publishers, critics, etc.

Riitta Oittinen states that nowadays 'a picture book can be anything: a toy-book, a pop-up book, an illustrated story with emphasis on the visual, or a story told with pictures only. Sometimes a picture book is a combination of fact and fiction, like Jules Bass and Debbie Harter's two books about Herb, the vegetarian dragon, which I

recently translated into Finnish.’ (Oittinen, R. (2003). *Where the Wild Things Are: Translating Picture Books*)

i. Difficulties about translating children’s literature

One must be aware of readability while translating children’s books – if the text is not straightforward or the register or construction are not appropriate for children, then they will surely very quickly lose interest. One must also be aware of the authenticity of the characters and make sure to step away from what might be the translator’s own voice and, rather, become vigilant of the voices that the author has given the characters in the first place. It is important to always remember who is speaking and thinking and reacting in the story. Gender awareness must also be taken into consideration, as the fact of whether the character(s) in question are boys or girls will very likely also have its own share of need of adaptability and malleability from the translator, especially if the target language possesses instruments that indicate the gender of things. Visualising the characters in beforehand and then imagine how their English-speaking equivalent would say and do the same thing proved to be of the utmost importance, as the characters must to sound real. Guaranteeing the characters sound real means making sure the language and references used in the translation are relevant to the context and experience of a ten-year-old in the way the author imagined them. In fact, word choices one of the contexts where one would see this. The differences between English and Portuguese are particularly noticeable in children’s writing. A big parcel of the higher register Latinate words must be eliminated and find more idiomatic English equivalents to suit the voice which the translator is trying to convey, to ascertain that they would be words which would believably be used by youths. Not of lesser importance, is sentence-structure. Portuguese syntax is generally more complex, and while this can make for a poetic or literary read in adult prose, in children’s writing this characteristic should only be resorted to as a last resource and in a few unavoidable contexts.

Finally, many children’s books are bound to have humour in them, which may bring a new set of dilemmas in its entirety. The same things are not always funny in different cultural contexts, so it is important to be familiar with both and try to find something equivalent to draw the same laughs out of the target readers. The language in

which the joke or punchline said is just as crucial: one must use all the tools at one's disposal in order to get the best version out of it: register, cadence, rhythm, literary device, musicality and prosody – which is where reading aloud is effective. Another tactic that can prove to be very useful to find out whether one was successful with one's translation is to have feedback from children. If they laugh and understand the joke, then it is probably a job well done, otherwise, one may want to consider revising the text and trying again.

ii. Definition of picture books/illustrated books/graphic narratives

Defining a book's literary genre is not an easy task, and *Cyclone* is no exception. We need to analyse various approaches and take into consideration all the aspects gathered within this narrative, in order to adequately find and propose a genre for it. In what way is this a picture book? An illustrated book? A graphic narrative? As Riitta Oittinen very clearly puts it:

As iconotexts, picture books and comics share many features - for example, they are both based on a series of images and have a serial character (e.g. Berger 1998: 131-146). Like comics, picture books have a language of their own. They are combinations of the verbal, the visual, and someone reading them. Instead of frames, picture books have the turning of the pages. Shulevitz compares picture books with films and theatre: 'By telling a story visually, instead of through verbal description, a picture book becomes a dramatic experience: immediate, vivid, moving. A picture book is closer to theatre and film, silent films in particular, than to other kinds of books.' (Shulevitz 1985: 16, cit. Riitta Oittinen (2001) pg. 110)

The translation of picture books and graphic narratives has attracted considerable attention in recent years from translation scholars. There have been a number of books devoted to the subject, with approaches varying from the relationship between the visual and the textual (Oittinen), the cognitive skills of reading graphic narratives (Chute), to the topic of disability in comic books and graphic narratives. As Chris Foss, Jonathan W. Gray and Zach Whalen all state:

The nexus between comics (as one of the most popular and increasingly significant mediums for artistic expression) and disability (as one of the most fundamental and increasingly significant components to human identity). A number of the essays collected here engage with the fraught history of how disability has been represented in sequential art, delineating the numerous ways in which the comic medium continues to implicate itself in the objectification and marginalization of persons with disabilities, perpetuating stale stereotypes and stigmas. At the same time, many will stress how this medium, in both its form and its content, simultaneously offers some unique potential for transforming our understanding of disability, illness, and trauma. (Disability in Comic Books and Graphic Narratives, 2016, pg. 2)

Graphic narratives can place a great demand on cognitive skills, as readers are required to interpret not only text but also images (Chute, 2008). Comics differ from illustrated books in that the images are an essential element; they are not supplementary as in an illustrated text, but play an integral role in the telling of the story, hence, this use of both text and image offers a ‘combination of linguistic and visual codes’ (Groensteen, 2007, pg. 2). Giving a more historical background to the story of graphic narratives, Lan Dong states:

Commonly known as book-length comics, graphic narratives include both fiction and non-fiction. The past three decades have seen an increase in the readership of graphic narratives as well as in scholarly interests in this subject. A number of college and university professors have integrated this medium into their courses across different disciplines. This collection brings together scholarly essays that discuss methodologies, strategies, and challenges for using graphic narratives in undergraduate and graduate classes. These works hope to fill in the gap between texts and the classroom by providing a platform for scholars to explore the intimate connection between graphic narratives and literary genres, themes, criticism, and theories. (Lan Dong, 2012, pg. 5)

In the case of illustrated books, text is primary and the pictures secondary – which means they might as well be removed, and the message would still come across –, and in that of picture books, pictures are primary and even not contain any words

whatsoever. This book makes clear use of both dimensions. The text deeply intertwines itself with the drawings and vice versa. There is really no other way that the message of this story could be so well conveyed, were it not for this innovative intersemiotic duality. Therefore, it cannot make much sense without the pictures that are expected to go with each page. This intersemiotic relationship is vital to a better understanding and visualisation of what is being read. Quite naturally, the translator must not forget about the fact that there are images and drawings that serve as guidelines to an exemplary translation. Digression is not an option, although it may be easy to embellish the text according to our own taste or view on the matter. David Lewis, the British scholar on picture books, says that:

(...) Picture books may tell a story, tell several stories at the same time, or tell no story whatsoever (Lewis 2001:4-5). Picture books also break boundaries, like combining the possible and the impossible (such as different perspectives in one picture) or different styles and techniques of writing and illustrating (such as those of comics). Disregarding literary norms, picture books often go to the extreme and the excess and include fragmentation, decanonisation, irony, and hybridization. They may also tempt the reader to perform and participate (like turning the pages and reading aloud; see Lewis 2001:87-101).

Schwarcz, in turn, adds her own prism on this matter by briefly explaining how the verbal and the visual elements work with each other to, justifiably, make this technique a successful one.

The verbal and the visual may have several functions. The words and the pictures (as well as other visual elements) in a story may support each other and tell just about the same things: through congruency, illustrations show the activity described, doubling or paralleling what is said in words. Illustrations may also go in opposite directions and stand in contradiction: through deviation, they counterpoint or veer away from the story told in words. (Schwarcz 1982:14-16, cit. Oittinen, R. (2003: pg. 130))

According to British translator Anthea Bell (1987: pg. 17-26), there is a third dimension in the process of translating for children, inherent to which is the relationship between text and image:

In addition to source and target languages, a translator for children often works with images, either illustrations that punctuate a prose text or, in the case of the modern picture book, an intricate and vital counterpoint between image and text. (Bell, Anthea, cit. Lathey, G. (2006: pg. 111))

In the opinion of Emer O’Sullivan (2003: pg. 113), the language of pictures is international, as it usually transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries. Provided that pictures and text cannot go their own separate ways, it is safest to say that the translation of such books must reflect the awareness of not only the importance of the original text, but also of the interaction between the visual and the verbal elements therein: how the picture relate to the words and the outcome thereof. Such an interaction is not verbalised, but allows the interplay to be possible and dynamic. Ideally, the reader of the translation is invited to do the same type of work as that of the original.

Picture books are especially challenging to the translator, due to the existence of two media (text and image), whose translation process may prove all the more difficult, should the messages conveyed by each one of them be consistently erratic, in that the text tells one story and the images tell another. The pictures stimulate the linguistic creativity of the translator, who may culminate in them making elements more explicit in the target text than they were in the source text. Certain gaps in the source text may be filled in by translators in the target text.

Cyclone is, therefore, in my opinion, both a picture book and an illustrated book, as it vastly shares characteristics of both literary genres and one cannot subsist without the other in this particular case. The images cannot be left without pictures and the pictures cannot convey any meaning or sense without their visual counterpart, as we have seen before – mainly in the bits of text where the words physically intertwine with the verbal component of the story and end up giving ever more meaning to the message being conveyed and emphasising the way which this type of book interacts with its readers, regardless of nationality, geography or culture.

Translating picture books/illustrated books

Every time translation takes place, a new language, a new culture and new target-language readers are put into focus. According to Riitta Oittinen (2003: 139), the act of translating picture books implicates translating iconotexts that consist of the duality between verbal and visual. In this situation, the visual is more than just the words and pictures themselves; it is the visual appearance of the book, including details like sentence structure and punctuation, in its entirety.

The latter are also very important from the aloud-reader's angle: picture books are performed for child audiences. Nowadays, the visual is a central issue in many other branches of translation as well, such as audio-visual translation and technical writing. Even interpreters need to interpret people's gestures and body language. Yet far too often translators are understood as dealing with the verbal only, which is the reason why visual literacy is neglected in translator training. (Oittinen, R. (2003: pg. 139).

Knowing the importance of the verbal-visual duality, it is fair to say that it also conveys certain aspects of the story and of the writing of the text itself, such as when it was written, by whom it was written and where and why it was written. And in regards to this, Riitta Oittinen very aptly defends that:

Words or images cannot be divorced from their contexts but are situated in time and place: in new situations they continually take on new meanings. When a book in translation is illustrated, the pictures bring along a new point of view. The visual is the context of the words, and the other way around: when translating picture books, it is this totality of the verbal and the visual that is translated. (Oittinen, R. (2003: pg. 132))

According to Radegundis Stolze (2003: pg. 220), translators deal with the task of writing a translation from a given text. They must ask themselves and decide in what way they are to present such and such a message. In translating for children, there is also the question about pedagogics as an overall goal of text production. What kind of worldview are we to impose on children responsibly – or which do we wish to impose?

It is a question of ethics whether one will simply represent a given text by a faithful translation.

We may conclude that translators and storytellers should be aware of and reflect on the problems inherent in their work. Translation is not only a question of language transfer, of easy reading and of old-fashioned or modern wording. Even ideology reflects in the formulations. Translation is a question of understanding the text and the cultural background, and of deciding about the concrete language formulations to be used that imply decisions on coherence, style and ideology. (Stolze, R. (2003: pg. 220). *Translating for Children – World View or Pedagogics?*)

Seen as though *Cyclone* is a book that tells a story for children making use of a text and a narrative which both respect and fall into the aforementioned canons, we can argue that it is, indeed, a picture book, not only for its obvious outlook, but because it perfectly carries out its pedagogic message in a way that children or, as the case may be, young adults, understand, identify with it and even learn from it.

As the translator, I tried to follow these points and bring to life such a version of the original text that youngsters all throughout the English-speaking world will easily understand what they are reading, despite the intentionally-maintained cultural differences, and feel compelled to further investigate information that has to do with the Portuguese culture that they may not know much about.

DESCRIPTION OF CYCLONE: DIARY OF A ROLLER COASTER

This book, inspired on the text from the play *Montanha-Russa*, by Inês Barahona and Miguel Fragata, which premiered in March 2018 in Teatro Nacional D. Maria II, in Lisbon and then passed through other national and international theatres, has as the centrepiece of its story a roller coaster named Cyclone. It is written in diary form and the story takes place throughout various decades (since the 1970s to present day).

This softcover book is 16.5 x 23.5 cm, has 96 pages in total and makes use of illustrations to complement its textual component. The cover has an illustration of a tornado with hands and feet popping out of it, which invites the reader to use their imagination. The first thought that came over me when I first saw the cover was that the tornado simply represents the tornado that is life – much like Cyclone itself is the personification of life, as well –, with all its changes, ups and downs, etc. The illustrations found inside the book are very much part of the textual message themselves. They sometimes intertwine with the messages conveyed through the narration of the story and help readers visualise in a more dynamic and fun way the story being told. The pictures are as much a part of the storytelling as the text, as not only do they complete and give a clearer vision, should one be needed, on the subject, but they also bring elements into play that may not be easily spotted at first reading, thus providing the action of telling a story with more colour and vivacity.

The story takes place in four different time periods (from the 1970s until present-day), in four different places in the world (Portugal, Germany, Peru and Ukraine). Anabela, Bernardo, Carla and M. are the four main characters around which the story revolves. Although there is no direction relationship nor dialogue between them throughout the story, a few common traits that they share are their love for adventure and funfairs and their youthful outlook on things on the path to maturity. Every reader, however, will read what they will into the story and draw their own conclusions. This is a story mainly about memories – hence the diary entries – and learnings throughout the roller coaster ride of life. Anabela comes across and a well-brought-up girl who is very family-oriented and is going through the normal phases in a young girl's life – boys and teenage angst. Bernardo is the audacious and adventurous one of the group, with an adult conscientiousness of the world around him and the problems that affect the natural balance of things, with his entries being about adventures and mishaps and his

proactivity thereupon. Carla seems to be the activist of the group, as she has many an entry with political discourses about political/historical events that she took part in or has a strong opinion about. M. is probably the most resourceful and savvy of the lot, in that he helped open a new funfair in Lima Peru, after the one in Berlin, Germany, closed down, despite all odds, while going through tough family matters.

The first matter to take into consideration is the target public, whom this sort of text is to be read by. What age range? What background? This translation is aimed for a target public of youngsters from twelve to sixteen years of age, from various backgrounds, who have a minimum competence in English, regardless of whether they are native speakers or whether they speak it as a lingua franca. The publisher is planning to market this book in Portugal and anywhere else where the Orfeu Mini collection is for sale. This raises the importance of register. Are we to adopt the original register? Are we to change it? How do we think that it is going to be perceived in the end by young people in the aimed target language? This matter easily leads the translator to meet other nuances of the panoply of relevant things to take into consideration. The sociocultural aspects of the work in question are of the utmost importance. In such cases, the translator has to choose in between domesticating the source text – i.e. somehow combining and absorbing the source text and inherent aspects with the target text and aspects – or foreignising it, which is when particularities of the source text are left intact, in order to be perceived by the target audience as being foreign.

The maintenance of an adequate register was, for me, the prevailing one, since it is through this step that some of the other difficulties may arise. The language used by the characters in the story is what distinctly sets them apart from each other in terms of personal jargon, slang, idiolect and other forms of personal markers. This in itself is quite an extensive problem whilst translating such a text. In the context of this book, register matters particularly, as without it, the notion of difference periods in time will be lost, and so will the characters' own personal traits, references, ambiance and style.

Every factor of life plays a role in this panoply of choices: cultural markers, such as, in this case, references to religion and religious festivities, public holidays, as well as deictic markers (*here, there, this, that*, etc.) and linguistic issues like slang terms and puns.

COMMENTARY

Difficulties of translating *Cyclone: Diary of a Rollercoaster*

Although, in generic terms, translating this children's book was not an impossible task, it did contain some inherent complexities, despite the fact that they were not to be found in every line, sentence, paragraph or page. Although I have a (near-)native level of English, translating from one's mother tongue into another (provided that the more familiar process goes the other way around) is not an easy task and does, indeed, have some nuances that may not seem very apparent at first sight. Therefore, as is to be expected, on a first attempt at translating literary works, certain sentences and syntactical contexts may, somehow, be lost in translation. The most apparent problem is that the duality of cultures (Portuguese and English) are intrinsically connected to one another and cannot be dissociated. We must bear in mind that both cultures are connected through language and diversity – diversity unites things more than it casts them apart. When confronted with the task of passing one text, one culture, one ensemble of significances to a wholly different target context, we must perceive the difficulties and similarities. Regarding the similarities, we have to take into account the way the original text is written and in what way we could pass the information contained in it along to another culture, without having it be too disparaging from the original message, in such a way that the target audience could relate to it.

My first tactic was to domesticate whatever reference that, in turn, referred to Portuguese reality – be it religious, linguistic, generational or geographical. I soon realised that it was not working and that certain aspects of the original text and its playfulness were being lost. Despite this, I never gave the option of replacing the Portuguese references with English alternatives much thought, as it never seemed to be an appropriate solution for such a text, which can play an important role in teenagers' general culture. Hence, I decided that a tactic that made the text purposely foreign would be adequate path to take.

Whilst translating *Cyclone: Diary of a Roller Coaster*, there were linguistic issues of both superior and lesser importance to be overcome. In its entirety, the suggestions/options found were quite fortunate translations for rather idiomatic

expressions, but that is not to say that the entire process of translation was free of obstacles.

i. Register

The need for a certain level and type of register whilst translating needs to be tended to with a certain coherent level of maintenance throughout the whole translation, as each character has their own personal style and personality, that are conveyed through each one of their diary entries. This is how the reader gets to know them more in depth.

The variety of English to be used in the translation was a question to take into consideration, too. As one who has been educated in the British school system, one would expect the British phonetic variant of English to be the natural to have. However, the American variant comes easiest and most naturally, which has an obvious reflection on the register, which was subconsciously chosen. As for the writing, the British spelling was the preferred option, and it posed no obstacle to the publisher and neither will it pose an obstacle to the target audience, when it comes to the full comprehension of the story.

Having realised that the final draft had resulted in a mixture between both British and American English, it was clear that there were inherent problematics to such a translation, one which at the beginning seemed so direct and free of particular issues, other than the linguistic, semantic and syntactical options to choose from.

As one can distinctly perceive, all four characters all belong to different time-periods, ranging from the 1970s to present day. This is obviously going to have an influence in the way each character expresses themselves in terms of putting onto to paper what they would say. Upon reading the original version, however, the notion of such disparity between registers used by all four characters, even though there are some deictic markers that differ from generation to generation and may express different ideas, did not have such emphasis. In order to convey the intended message in English, I have made use of some vocabulary, distinctive of younger generations, with which the characters write their diary entries. A somewhat tricky point, that I was not aware of before starting to translate this story, is that English-speaking children, at home, will incorporate Germanic-based words and terms into their daily vocabulary, as opposed to the Latin-based ones, which are mostly taught in academic environments. Taking into

consideration the characters' age and the age of the public that this book is meant for, the overuse of Latin-based words was generally avoided. Each character was also given their own trademark speech style, in conformity with their personality. The fact that they all belong to different decades, geographies and possibly even social stratifications (judging by a few register pointers in the original, such as Anabela's use of the Portuguese vocative 'mãezinha' – 'mummy' –, which has fallen out of use in modern times as a marker of a period in time), and all their different lives and experiences had to be taken into account. This approach serves to help differentiate them from their counterparts and make the reading of the story itself feel more realistic, despite being aimed at teenagers of around the ages of 12-16, which is probably something that they would not necessarily notice at first. Consistency in slang is key, provided all generations have their specific markers that identify them and set them within the context of all the aforementioned factors. Examples of this are the expression used by Carla on page 2 of the story, denoting a connotation of exasperation: 'My days have been so boring', which is something that a child would say on a daily basis – with a polyvalent meaning, even – to describe something that is not quite what they had hoped. The Portuguese translation preferred was: 'Os meus dias têm sido uma seca!' On page 56-57 of the book, on Anabela's longest entry, the reader of the Portuguese text can easily perceive the register used as lightly literary, due to word order, sentence structure and verb use. The English text, on the other hand, presents a more banal narrative in terms of register. In the original, she tends to be rather formal and well-read for her age, which is, sadly, not the norm, at least in more recent times: '(...) Para não encontrar ninguém que pudesse dizer à minha avó que me *vira*'. 'Vira' is very literary third-person singular pluperfect form of the verb 'ver' ('to see') which is rarely – if ever – used in daily speech, despite its correct usage. The solution for that, also because English a direct equivalent of the Portuguese pluperfect verb tense, was '(...) So that I wouldn't meet anyone that would tell my grandmother *they'd seen* me'. The same thing happens again further down, when she asks herself why she '*had [I] fallen* in love with someone who was going away forever (...)', to which the Portuguese translation was 'Por que me *fora* (verb 'ser', 'to be') eu apaixonar por alguém que partia assim (...)?' In Portuguese, the pluperfect form tends to be used in literature to describe a past action before the past action being mentioned at the time of writing/speaking – for which the regular past tense is used.

In one of Bernardo's entries, on page 64, after a telephone call with his father, he describes being 'so angry', where my initial acceptation for a translation was the probably more Americanised forma 'I was so mad'. In the Portuguese version, we have 'Fiquei furioso'.

ii. Word play

As regards puns, one particular was decisive for the text's comprehension and comedic aspect. Where in the Portuguese text we have *Eu sou EU*, while Bernardo was writing an account of photographing in Pripyat, in reference to the fact than he considered himself an *explorador urbano* ('urban explorer'), while making a pun with *eu* (the Portuguese word for 'I'), in English, an attempt was made to try and keep the pun by translating it to *I'm an EU*, which did not work. The hopes of making a quibble with the European Union was eventually left behind, and the decision was made to go instead for *I'm ME*, in which *ME* stands for *metropolitan explorer*.

iii. Culturally specific terms

All throughout the original text are deictic markers that reference Portuguese reality, way of life, religion, traditions or language, which, logically, emphasise the Portuguese purport of the story. As this is a text aimed at an English-speaking teenage audience, a decision had to be made regarding the strangeness, whether it was to be kept or embedded within the target audience's culture and familiarity. The first issue that came about was right at the start, upon the translation of the blurb on the book's left flap. The text describes the fact that this book is 'inspired by the text of the show *Roller Coaster*, by Inês Barahona and Miguel Fragata, which premiered in March 2018 at the Dona Maria II National Theatre, Lisbon, before moving on to other theatres, both in and outside of Portugal'. The original text references the theatres in question as both 'nacionais' (national) and 'estrangeiros' (foreign). The chosen option was to state that said theatres were both 'in Portugal and abroad', in order to simultaneously indicate and emphasise, albeit subconsciously, that it had primarily to do with Portuguese reality and context.

PT:

Assinam em conjunto o texto e a encenação dos seus espetáculos, que têm sido apresentados em diversos teatros e festivais *nacionais e estrangeiros*.

EN:

Together, they are responsible for the scripts and the staging of their shows, which have been presented at various theatres and festivals *in Portugal and abroad*.

iv. Grammatical issues

In addition, one particularly curious feature of the Portuguese language that the English language does not have is the historic present. Therefore, when talking about flashbacks, for example, as is the case in the book, we would not refer to a past action or event using a verb in the present tense, as it sounds contradictory – a usage very much alive and perfectly functional in both literary and everyday colloquial Portuguese. There is one particular situation in the book where Bernardo writes about how he vividly remembers the events that took place at Chernobyl, and that had to be explicitly expressed in the past tense in English.

PT:

É dia 27 de abril de 1986, domingo, *faz* sol. *Faltam* apenas três dias para que o parque de diversões de Pripyat seja inaugurado. *Vai* ser no Primeiro de Maio, Dia do Trabalhador, com pompa e circunstância.

Versus the English:

EN:

It *was* April 27, 1986, Sunday, and the sun *was* out. There *were* only three days left to the opening of Pripyat's amusement park. It *was* going to take place on May 1 – International Workers' Day –, with pomp and circumstance.

v. Culturally specific issues.

The notion of cultural issues involves the integrated and maintained system of socially acquired values, beliefs and rules of conduct, which impact the range of accepted behaviours distinguishable from one societal group to another.

As my policy to solve such problems was that of maintaining foreignness, the following problematics would be solved accordingly. The question of whether I should make the characters English or keep them Portuguese. The reason for my having decided not to change their nationality is because that would, ultimately, implicate several other changes or omissions that would result in a great cultural and referential loss. It would impoverish the story.

On page 8, there is an illustration of Bernardo's school report. Quite logically, one of the subjects that feature on it is Portuguese. I decided to keep it, in accordance with my previous decision not to change any Portuguese references to anything but what they were. My first option was to, in fact, change it to English, but obviously it made no sense keeping certain things in their original context and change others. This duality of maintenance or appropriation may work from time to time – though it is not advisable to go for both options at the same time, from a literary point of view –, but it was too evident for the reader, had I ultimately decided to go in that direction.

Another inevitable cultural issue is the reference to the metric system, which is the system used in Portugal. This may cause some confusion in the minds of English-speaking teenagers and hinder their comprehension thereof, as the metric system may or may not be used, depending on context, in their countries. As discussed above in a previous section, I decided to keep it intact, hoping that it will incite the reader to do some research and learn from it.

Knowing this – and taking into consideration that names may also cause strangeness –, one decision that had to be made, in terms of keeping things relatable or maintaining a certain foreignness to them, was whether the characters were to have English-sounding names or to keep their original Portuguese ones. At first, option number one *did* seem to be more appealing, but due to a few other issues that arose later on, their names were ultimately kept in their original Portuguese variants. Initially, I had decided to change the names Bernardo, Anabela and Carla (not M. because it is no different in either language) to Bernard, Annabel and Poppy, respectively, so that the

target readers would assimilate them more easily, without finding them odd. In the end, and despite having been given full liberty to do this by the publisher, I decided to keep all characters Portuguese, with their Portuguese names, to provide the target text with another element of foreignness.

Religiously speaking, Portugal is a Catholic country – which England and most English-speaking countries are not. Because of this, religious markers such as the reference to the medallion of the Our Lady of the Assumption – who is not a prominent figure within ecclesiastical context for Protestants, Anglicans, etc., as is not the celebration of the Assumption of Mary – and Carnival, another catholic festivity inexistent in Anglo-Saxon culture, do not mean much to readers whose cultural background englobes all of these aspects. However, I thought it would be interesting to keep the strangeness in such a text, provided that it would instigate and move the public that it is aimed at to go look information up on whatever subject they may know little about, thus making way for a dynamism and interest in things foreign.

Two other very important cultural markers for Portuguese people, which surely English-speaking teenagers would know very little or nothing about, are the references to the PIDE (the International and State Defence Police) and the April 25 Revolution (also known as the Carnation Revolution), as these are intrinsic events to Portuguese History.

vi. Intersemiotics

The intersemiotic dimension of the text also raised issues for translation. In one of Anabela's entries on page 3, she mentions 'the small piece of paper which came out from Zaida, the fortune-teller' (*o papelinho que saía da Zaida*). Given that Anabela is describing her going to a fair, it was a rather straightforward idea to assume that if a piece of paper comes out from someone, then that someone must be inanimate, therefore, a machine. Looking at the illustrations in the book, the reader cannot be led into thinking that it is anything other than a machine, as the depiction of a machine with a woman inside appears, hinting that it is a coin-working machine. If one has no access to the drawings, however, this idea could be easily misinterpreted, as there are also fortune-tellers in fairs who happen to be living people and there is really no other reference to it being a machine other than context.

As this book talks about a massive 26-metre tall roller coaster very fittingly named Cyclone, I thought it would be interesting to refer to it in English as ‘*the* Cyclone’, as the definite article here emphasises the power and majesty of the roller coaster – which is, ultimately, a metaphor of the roller coaster that is life. The use of the definite article in Portuguese has much more widespread occurrence than it does in English (for example, ‘a [montanha-russa] Ciclone’), and so, as a native speaker of Portuguese, I must acknowledge that this interesting game of semantics is somewhat lost in the Portuguese text.

CONCLUSION

For as fun and new an experience as translating *Cyclone: Diary of a Roller Coaster* was, the positive feedback that I have received from the publisher also added to my personal satisfaction and accomplishment as a professional translator. In the end, there was no displeasure on the publisher's part, as they complimented me several times on my work and assiduity and only had few and minor suggestions to the translation. Being a simple matter of vocabulary preference, it has altered in no way whatsoever the sense that I had intended to give to my rendition of the text. Furthermore, because the publisher's suggestions regarded words instead of full sentences, no negotiations were necessary in order to keep or do away with translational options. All the questions and doubts that I had about their preferences or habits when dealing with translations and translators were well dealt with and responded to in a very polite and receptive manner, which also helped me be more sure about the natural and imaginative way to go about the translation. I was given complete trust and space to take charge of the text as I pleased. This having been my first official work for a publisher – and quite a well-known one, no less –, it was rather reassuring to be able to rely on the fact that my better judgment was not being put into question. It was even more (self-)reassuring to have found that it was appreciated and looked at with ease about the original text having been made justice to.

As regards the publication of the work, Orfeu Negro has not made known to me when it was to be published, only that it is to be published and sold in Portugal and anywhere abroad where the Orfeu Mini collection happens to be marketed – insight as to where specifically this book is to be marketed was not disclosed either. They did say, however, that it was to be presented at book fairs where Orfeu Negro is very much present.

Thus far, I have no knowledge as to whether this is will eventually result in more work for me, though I have let them know on my last e-mail that I am available for translations that they may have, should they need it.

I discovered an area of Translation that I knew nothing about and have ever since become more and more interested in. I hope that it can help me shape my path in to the area. Through this experience, I did some research online and eventually decided to sign

up for a small course on illustration, fuelled by the existence of illustrations in this book. I think it would be both a useful and productive way to make use out of my artistic skills if I were to translate more children's books, while being tasked with their illustration.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bell, Anthea, cit. Lathey, Gillian, ed. *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*. Topics in Translation 31. Clevedon [England]; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2006.

Chute, Hillary. "Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narratives". Volume 123, Number 2 (2008): 452–465 (14).

Dong, Lan. "Teaching Comics and Graphic Narratives: Essays on Theory, Strategy and Practice", 2012.

Foss, Chris, W. Gray, Jonathan, Whalen, Zach. "Disability in Comic Books and Graphic Narratives", 2016.

Groensteen, Thierry, Beaty, Bart and Nguyen, Nick. "The System of Comics". Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2007.

Lathey, Gillian, ed. *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*. Topics in Translation 31. Clevedon [England]; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2006.

Lewis, David. Oittinen, R. (2003). Where the Wild Things Are: Translating Picture Books. *Meta*, 48 (1-2), 128–141

O'Sullivan, Emer. "Translating Pictures." In *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*, edited by Lathey, Gillian, 113–21. Clevedon, Buffalo and Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2006.

Oittinen, Riitta, Anne Ketola, and Melissa Garavini. *Translating Picture Books: Revoicing the Verbal, the Visual, and the Aural for a Child Audience*. Routledge Advances in Translation and Interpreting Studies 30. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Oittinen, Riitta. "Where the Wild Things Are: Translating Picture Books." *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal* 48, no. 1–2 (May 2003): 128–41.

Schwarcz, J. H. (1982): "Ways of the Illustrator. Visual Communication in Children's Literature". Chicago: American Library Association.

Stolze, Radegundis. "Translating for Children - World View or Pedagogics?" *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal* 48, no. 1–2 (2003): 208–21.

ANNEX 1

TRANSLATION

[LEFT FLAP]

Four people, four moments in time, four places in the world and a roller coaster: the Cyclone. Two boys – M. and Bernardo – and two girls – Carla and Anabela, between the ages of 13 and 19, write in their diaries. Each new entry is a ticket for a ride aboard the Cyclone. From the ‘70s up to the present, pages full of loop-the-loops, thrilling ups and downs, suspensions, expectations, impressions, disappointments, first times and last times.

The Cyclone is a 26-meter-high amusement park ride attraction, but it is also the roller coaster, which we have all already experienced, or will experience, as we make our way towards adulthood. A diary of emotions, inspired by the text of the show *Roller Coaster*, by Inês Barahona and Miguel Fragata, which premiered in March 2018 at the Dona Maria II National Theatre, Lisbon, before moving on to other theatres, both in and outside of Portugal.

[RIGHT FLAP]

Inês Barahona & Miguel Fragata formed the *Formiga Atómica* theatre company (Lisbon) in 2014. Together, they are responsible for the scripts and the staging of their shows, which have been presented at various theatres and festivals in Portugal and abroad. They like to reflect on urgent, current issues and to come up with artistic projects for everybody.

Do Bosque para o Mundo, *A Caminhada de Elefantes* and *Montanha-Russa* are some of their creations. *Cyclone – Diary of a Roller Coaster* is the first adventure in book publishing.

formiga-atomica.com

Mariana Malhão is an illustrator who studied Communication Design at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Oporto, where she resides. She has participated in various projects with independent publishers and co-founded the Senhora Presidenta gallery (Oporto). She likes exploring surreal universes, drawing strange figures and using colours and vibrant shapes. She has illustrated the compilation of poems by António José Forte, *Uma Rosa na Tromba de um Elefante*, published (2018) in the Orfeu Mini collection (Orfeu Negro editions).

marianamalhao.com

CYCLONE

DIARY OF A ROLLER COASTER

TEXT

Inês Barahona & Miguel Fragata

ILLUSTRATIONS

Mariana Malhão

ANABELA

5 JULY 1973

Dear diary,

Such boring holidays. Nothing happens. I've been on holidays for a couple of days now and I cannot stand this house anymore. My mum doesn't understand me, she just doesn't. She doesn't understand that I'm only sixteen years old. She was born before me, it's true, but I shall never experience whatever she has been through! Times have changed. We're in 1973! Things have moved on and she doesn't know what it's like to be sixteen in 1973! She belongs to another time! But she doesn't understand that.

When will this summer be over?

CARLA

5 AUGUST 1989

Dear diary,

I think all diaries start like this...

I saw you in the stationer's window and I couldn't resist. And what's more, you smell nice!

I'm going to do the usual thing when one buys a diary: I'll write and you'll listen.

I'm thirteen years old and my family is normal. Everything's fine. Apart from Mum and me; we fight about everything. My dad and I can't stand each other. I don't know what Mum ever saw in Dad, and I really don't know what he ever saw in her, either...

I don't feel like writing anything else. My days have been so boring. That's all for today.

ANABELA

15 JULY 1973

Dear diary,

I haven't written anything because there's absolutely nothing going on. It's sheer emptiness. What will tomorrow be like? I hope it's better!

M.

13 AUGUST 2000

I've decided to begin writing this diary, this letter, in order to tell my story, just like my great-grandfather did.

He began this family tradition.

My family has always been connected to funfairs – rides and illusions. My great-grandfather was the first one.

He was German. A circus artist. A great illusionist. He was very good at telling his own life as if it were a story.

It always began at eight years old, which was when he had become a lion tamer. Then he was kidnapped by a gang of thieves, taken to Africa, where he became the chief of a pygmy tribe and got married in secret to the daughter of the emperor of Ethiopia. It sounds impossible, but apparently, it all happened.

The juiciest episode would be kept for last: my great-grandfather was crowned king of Albania. Precisely eighty-seven years ago today, 13 August 1913.

He would tell how he had seen a curious ad in a newspaper: Albania (the country) was looking for a missing prince to be its leader. And that missing prince looked a lot like my great-grandfather.

You could see it in the ad's photograph! So he decided to leave for Albania, accompanied by his sword-swallower friend, and take charge.

There he reigned. He took what he could get from the palace, spent most of the crown treasure and even dared declare war on Serbia, just for the kick of it. Five days into it, he decided that it was enough and left. Back in Germany, he demanded to be referred to as 'the former king of Albania':

[IMAGE]

Ehemaliger König von Albanien

When he died, it was found out that he even had that title on his ID. And so it is written on his tombstone. There's no German person today who doesn't believe this story, such was the conviction with which my great-grandfather defended it. I write this diary, this letter, so that everyone believes my story.

ANABELA

11 AUGUST 1973

was going to be my future husband. My nose was ruining my future marriage! There I was, alone and without a husband or a nose. I know it's just a dream, but will I ever find someone who beats my nose and focuses on my legs?

M.

14 AUGUST 2000

I've been doing the maths: 18 years are 6575 days.

CARLA

12 AUGUST 1989

I've decided to give you a name today – it's going to be Dizzy. I hope you like it. Hello, Dizzy, how's everything going?

Not that great with me... I went to the beach with my best friend. She told me my swimsuit is a bit odd. I didn't go back to the pool because of that. I just feel like staying at home. I just feel like eating (I'm always hungry) and sleeping. And my back is covered in pimples... I feel really weird.

ANABELA

13 AUGUST 1973

Dear diary,

Today, my life has changed forever.

I don't even know where to begin...

I went to the fair but didn't have the nerve to go on the roller coaster...

So they wouldn't call me a coward, I played it cool. I said: 'I can't be bothered', 'I don't care', 'I'm not going'.

My brother was already in a bad mood because he thought my dress was too short. He became even more irritated by my refusal. After all, he was there to take care of the group, he was the eldest; if I didn't go, nobody else could either... But I convinced him

that I'd be good and stay near Zaida.

I've always been fascinated by the fair. Only she can tell what tomorrow's going to be like. Only she knows the future...

When I was there, next to Zaida, I came closer and inserted a coin. I kissed my little medallion of Our Lady of the Assumption, asked God that the odds be in my favour and looked up at the sky.

That was when I saw him.

He was inside the roller coaster's control booth, in front of a panel full of bright buttons. The lights fell on his profile – first red, then blue, then orange. He presses the button. He commands. He makes kids and their families slide along the roller coaster. He's the maestro of twists and turns who leaves the crowds exhilarated.

He's the god who moves the machine! (God forgive me...)

Suddenly, he turned to me. Embarrassed I lowered my eyes, and then I saw the small piece of paper coming out from Zaida:

[IMAGE]

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

If your winter is dragging on, spring should not be too long coming.

BERNARDO

CICLONE.BLOGSPOT.COM

I'm ME

But this needs explaining.

I've always been addicted to speed. I've always wanted to devour time and eat the future. I have always been in a hurry.

But that was before I ever got to Pripyat (I'm not sure if that's how you spell it). Pripyat is a whole city, in silence. It's in Ukraine, very close to Chernobyl. It's a typically Soviet city. Hundreds of streets laid out geometrically, thousands of identical flats in identical buildings, all of them with a bust of Lenin in the middle of the living room.

It was April 27, 1986, Sunday, and the sun was out. There were only three days left to the opening of Pripyat's amusement park. It was going to take place on May 1 – International Workers' Day –, with pomp and circumstance.

But on that very Sunday, as they opened the windows to their houses, Pripyat's

inhabitants could clearly see a huge column of smoke coming out of reactor 4 of Chernobyl's nuclear power plant. The reactor was on fire. All this happened a few kilometres away. The people were told that everything was fine and that the opening of the park would be rescheduled at an earlier date. A few hours later, the enormous yellow Ferris wheel started to spin. Families rush to park and queues form in front of the ticket offices. During the few hours that it's open, Pripyat's amusement park allows authorities to cover up the tragedy. It's the right to have fun which disguises a death sentence.

That very afternoon, the fifty thousand inhabitants were evacuated in an emergency, with the promise that they would return three days later. Thirty-three years later, nobody's yet returned. The city has been deserted ever since the explosion.

Today, people can already visit the ghost town: there are open books on the desks, clothes and toys scattered around the houses, clocks hanging on the walls, stuck in time. However, what we see isn't really the past. It's the way that the present has of taking over the past, like the plants that grow in the middle of the concrete, the animals that occupy empty spaces, the wind that blows at the crossroads and in the corners of the deserted streets. Visiting Pripyat isn't like peeking through a window with a view to the past. It isn't like rescuing an untouched pearl from the past from our memories. Visiting Pripyat is seeing how the present erases the past. Pripyat, as it once was, isn't available for visits.

It's like my past. It's also not available for visiting. It's not that I don't remember it. I remember it very well, I just don't want to open the window. My past stays behind. The only thing that interests me is the present. So I concentrate on the moment my life changed completely. On the moment when I was just standing there, motionless, in the middle of the main four-lane avenue, where nobody rode. I remember starting slowly to take picture and share them. The first likes came in, the first comments and the question: asking if I'm ME. At first, I don't get it: if I'm ME? And then, suddenly, somebody writes ME = Metropolitan Explorer. Me. And that was how, completely by chance, I became ME.

M.

16 AUGUST 2000

I'm going to start this letter from the beginning.

At the beginning, my parents travelled separately through Europe. My mum, through Eastern Europe, with the Catapult; and my dad with the Cyclone through Southern Europe – Italy, Portugal, Spain... Meanwhile, I was born, my brothers and sisters were born and the travelling went on. Us with our mum, and dad always alone. I spent the earlier years of my life travelling from one country to another, from fair to fair. What a relief and joy when Dad announced that he had bought an amusement park in Berlin. It was when the Wall fell. I was about ten or eleven, but I remember the speech he made on the opening day about the family tradition... My dad all proud, continuing that tradition. And I remember him telling, yet again, my great-grandfather's story.

BERNARDO

SUMMER CAMPAIGNS

I've already been to Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany and France. I've also been to Australia and Canada. I always take the chance to travel when the campaigns are over. With my rucksack on my back and very little money in my pocket. I hitch rides and go to unknown places. I've been to countries where they speak languages that I don't know. I've tasted all kinds of things, with various effects... I've come across communities and lifestyles that are sustainable, eco-friendly, balanced and self-sufficient – enough to say that I've tried a bit of everything. Few people can grasp this, but I think it's important to try things in order to find out who we are. Ah! The campaigns have nothing to do with politics! They're the summer harvest period Seasonal work. I'm an expert in picking strawberries, raspberries, broccoli, apples, pears, oranges, plums, peas, potatoes and tomatoes. I come and go for short periods. In between I have school. That's how I organise my expeditions. My project is to visit an abandoned amusement park every year somewhere in the world. Next stop: Latin America!

CARLA

14 AUGUST 1989

Dizzy,

Mum tells me I must wear a bra. I don't want to wear a bra. There were women who burnt their bras so women wouldn't have to wear them!

Everyone tells me I look like a true teenager. But whenever I hear that word, it's as though they all start looking at bits of my body that have changed and it's just so embarrassing.

What's the matter with me, Dizzy? What's the matter with me? Will somebody, please, tell me: what is the matter with me? Who is this person I've become? It's like I'm back-to-front... My head doesn't stop, but the world looks always the same, it repeats itself every single day. They told me the theory about what's happening to my body: the hormones, the changes in my body... But why is it so dodgy? Dad says that it seems like one moment I'm at a funeral, and then, next thing you know, it's Carnival.

Everything's just so confusing to me. I started to feel very sleepy and hungry, angry and then laughing out loud. I don't want to make any decisions. And I'd like these emotions that I feel to go away. I just want to be me

again and everything to go back to being simple. Why can't anything be simple?

ANABELA

13 AUGUST 1973

Dear diary,

Today, Mummy asked me to run some errands for her. I went to the pharmacy, then to the grocery store and, finally, to the café. As soon as I walked in, I saw him! The boy from the fair! My heart felt like it was about to burst from my chest. He came up to me and talked to me! He asked me whether I had been to the fair. He noticed me! Zaida was right! This, on its own, was a breath of spring... He's German. He's twenty-four years old and already owns a roller coaster: the Cyclone! He's very nice. He speaks a mix of Spanish, French and English, despite being German. He travels from country to country with the Cyclone and, since he told he would be leaving in a couple of days, he invited me for a free ride, tomorrow, after the fair closes for public, at midnight. Is this actually true?! I spent the whole day trying to imagine what it's going to be like! I have to talk Mummy into letting me go. I haven't even had the time to think about how afraid I am of going on a roller coaster! I just think about him! I'm not responsible for my

decisions; everything I do, I do for him! I couldn't care less if I ruin my life...

Aghhhh...

CYCLONE.BLOGSPOT.COM // FAQ

BERNARDO

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

My favourite one: What's all that about 'urban exploration'?

The answer is obvious: It's looking for something in abandoned places.

And the next question: But looking for what?

The answer depends on whom you ask:

a) A meaning for life. b) Excitement. c) Adrenaline. d) I don't know!

The insistent ones continue: But why in abandoned places?

And here I come up with a poetic answer: They're places full of secrets.

Then comes the voice of reason: But isn't that trespassing on private property?

But I have an answer ready!

There are rules: 'Don't take anything but pictures, don't leave anything but footprints.'

The spoilsport continues...

Have you thought about the consequences?

And yet another...

Do you really think there's a future in it for you?

And yet another...

Why don't you stop that?

And yet another...

What's the fun in that?

They won't stop, I can't even answer...

Wouldn't you rather do something else with your life?

I'm getting desperate...

Do you think that's how the world works?

And the final blow:

Do you really think you know anything about life?

And into the conversation go Mum, Dad, an aunt, Grandpa, the teacher, a friend...

Where were you last night? Where were you last night? Where were you last night?

Where were you last night? Where were you last night?

I shout:

End of FAQ!

ANABELA

15 AUGUST 1973

Dear diary,

Today I went to church with Mummy and my brother. It was the festival of the Assumption of Our Lady. It was a good way to get over last night's argument with Mummy. Dad never liked me to call her *mummy*, but what do I care? She was the one who raised me – my grandmother. Whether he likes it or not, she replaced my Mother. Mummy told me off about my short dress. My brother told her. She said, as a lesson, I couldn't go to the fair anymore. She doesn't understand what it's like to be sixteen and not have a mother!

Besides, times have changed. We're in 1973! Things have evolved I can't go back to the fair because of a dress?! This is no punishment, it's a dark and gloomy winter which will fall over me for as long as I live! I can't believe Zaida lied! She said that spring wouldn't be too long coming, but winter is back instead. How am I possibly going to survive not going back, after having seen him and talked to him? My life has changed ever since I saw him! If I can't go to the fair, if I can't meet him again, what else is there for me? I don't see any way out... If they keep me inside this house for a whole week, I will lock myself up in the kitchen and turn the gas on! I will do something crazy.

BERNARDO

LEAVING THE HOUSE, STAYING AT HOME

My going to Pripyat was a sort of baptism of urban exploration. Unbeknownst to me, I was an explorer for the first time. People may think that only those that are fixated on the past, on abandonment, like exploring. But the truth is that to explore is to discover the present. Abandonment is the present. In the past of the places which I explore, there was no abandonment, there was life. We have always lived surrounded by things, information and speed. Time is full, full, full. We never have any silence. When I explore and get to an abandoned spot, it's like I'm out of time. It's weird. A shock. Places look like film sets, they don't look real. Sometimes, I think that anything is possible there.

[IMAGE TEXT]

BUILD YOUR OWN HOUSE

THE GAME

CUT ALONG WHICHEVER LINE YOU WANT

BUT DON'T CUT YOURSELF!

I'm at a point in my life where the past is finally disappearing, in ruins.

Stone breaks, iron oxidises, water evaporates.

One of these days I shall go there on an expedition. For the time being, I shall explore other places.

The Japanese call *exploration* something along the lines of 'ruin hunting'. I'm a ruin hunter.

Most of my life was spent having to see two very different parents permanently arguing. I can't remember them ever having dreams in common, although they tell me that I'm the product of their only joint dream.

Every single time one of them wanted something, the other wanted the opposite. It became increasingly common that, when one of them would get home, the other one was on their way out. But the worst part was that I became a toy in their hands.

Everything I wanted was bound to be rejected by one and approved by the other. My poor choices were one or the other's fault. My good choices were due to my being the exact same as one or the other, they would tell me in secret. They wanted me to tell them whatever the other one told me in secret. They wanted me to follow in the footsteps of my paternal grandfather, or in those of my maternal grandmother. They wanted me to cut my hair like this or that, to wear shirts and trousers or shorts – according to their own taste. Every time that this happened, I turned into the infamous

bullet-man from the circus, launched from inside a cannon into uncertain parts. They – animal tamers – wielded the whip. I did pirouettes which, as usual, didn't please them. My mother wanted me to study more – whatever I were to become, was something to see later on. My dad wanted me to go out into the world and amount to something – whatever that meant. But nobody ever asked me what I wanted.

As soon as I turned sixteen, I decided that enough was enough. I didn't go live with either of them. With the money that I'd saved from the campaigns and other odd jobs that I did – lowering my needs to the basic stuff (sleeping bag and backpack) –, I went to live with friends. Right now, I'm living in three different places, according to the time of year. Whenever I don't have a place to stay, I go to my aunt and uncle, who don't have children and whose door has always been open for me. This is how it has been for the last two years, and I can scarcely remember my life being any other way. For now, I still fill in my mum's address on the official forms, but I will soon be of age and that is going to end.

CARLA

9 NOVEMBER 1989

Dizzy,

Today was a historical day, you know. The Berlin Wall fell. The two halves of Germany have reunited. Have you ever heard of such a thing, Dizzy? A country cut in half, two halves unable to speak to each other, no contact, whatsoever, for who knows how long... The time of a cold war... Europe divided in half by an iron curtain... Some walls have fallen today, inside me, too. But I feel like I'm split in half. I'm here in the present. Only my voice is stuck on the other side – in the past. I'm silent here, but shouting on the other side. My life has entered a cold, freezing war. I saw on the telly a few people my age jumping over the wall. I thought that, if I'd been there, I'd have just stayed on my side. I don't want to jump, Dizzy! I don't want to climb the wall. Walls have fallen inside me, today. Now, there's no way back. I'm like them, now – Western, or 'grown-up', like my mum says. She smiled at me and said: 'You're grown up'. She gave me a pill for the pain and told me that it would go away. She was going to pet me, but I managed to dodge. I'm in my room, lying down, ever since the walls inside me

fell. I've got a tummy ache. I just feel like crying. Europe celebrates a new world, a bright future. I look in between my legs and it's all dark.

M.

19 AUGUST 2000

I have good memories of the time we spent at the park, in Berlin. I remember us kissing on the ghost train, being caught smoking by my mother, inside the cabin of the Ferris wheel, while peeking at visitors from corners only I knew about...

But then the machines all started to break down. First, the Cyclone. A scandal, newspapers, court cases, compensations... Soon after, the other attractions followed. Newer parks opened, more oriented towards the future. And the youngsters from the East needed a future, after having crossed the Wall. Desperately. Our funfair in Berlin closed down. We had no place anymore. We were the past.

CARLA

10 JUNE 1990

Dizzy,

I'm sorry that I haven't written for so many months. Today, I really needed to; today was a terrible day.

My mum gave me the keys to the house and I had a crying spell. For real, Dizzy, I cried a lot!

I don't want to have the keys to the house, I don't want to open the door. It's hard to explain... Why doesn't anybody understand me? Why doesn't anybody listen to me, nor see me, for what I really am...?

I know that, for most people, it's great to have the house keys, but I'm not like most people. I don't want my mother to come near me, with that idiotic little smile of hers, to tell me how grown up I am. I don't want to be grown up. I want to stay just as I am. I don't know what came over me. Afterwards, I felt very embarrassed about crying; I cried even more, closed myself in my room and slammed the door behind me.

I think that having the house keys is like saying that I'm going to cross the wall. And I

don't want to be on this side. I want to stay on the other side. I want to go back. And I know that the consciousness of all of this means that I'm entering an age where that's not possible. Even if I don't want to go forward, I have to. And I don't want to.

I didn't have dinner. Mum brought me some toast a little while ago. She asked me if I was better and I shrugged. I don't know why I shrug my shoulders so often, lately. It feels right. I don't have to say anything.

I'm going to bed. Good night, Dizzy.

BERNARDO

A MEMORY

There's a memory that I keep from my whole childhood. My eternal, almost obsessive, passion for roller coasters. The constant addiction to speed, to vertigo. The constant rush. The limit. I've always thought that, if I were a machine, I'd be a roller coaster.

(IMAGE]

PORTUGUESE 4 — More was impossible

ENGLISH 4 — It couldn't have been less or more

HISTORY 4 — It's a very high 4 (said *the teacher*)

MATHEMATICS 3 — Well deserved

SCIENCE 3 — What an idiot

GEOGRAPHY 4 — This teacher is supercool

VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION 5 — I totally didn't see this coming

P.E. 4 — Well, little teacher? What about my 5?

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 4 — That's what I thought!

FRENCH 4 — Nailed it!

CARLA

9 JULY 1990

Dear Dizzy,

As my grades were good, Mum tells me I can go on holiday with my uncle. I love my

uncle.

I just don't understand how my uncle, who was also brought up by my grandma, can be so much more open-minded, so much more modern and capable of understanding the time we live in than my mother. She tells me they didn't use to get along. No wonder! Her, with all her limitations, and him, fully open-minded – it was doomed from the beginning!

My uncle understands me. It's a shame that he lives so far away, otherwise, I'd ask him to adopt me.

The moment I look forward to most all year is when he takes me on holidays. Just us two. And that's what's going to happen this summer! Anyway, I will have to be patient until the end of August.

CYCLONE.BLOGSPOT.COM

BERNARDO

GETTING READY

The first hurdle to be overcome is other people. That's also why I decided to start a blog.

When I started sharing my exploration projects, there would always be someone telling me about the danger, trying to frighten me, reminding me of all the restrictions.

In this, like in other things, I realised that the best thing to do was to speak only to the interested parties. It's one of the advantages of blogs.

Supposedly, whoever follows you has an interest in what you do, in what you show, and in who you are. And I'm an ME...

I learned all I know about exploring by reading other blogs that I follow. Now, I'm really part of the community of explorers and I religiously follow every rule that I've learned since the first hour: 'Don't take anything but pictures, don't leave anything but footprints.'

Experience has taught me other lessons...

[IMAGE]

FRIEND 10 FOLLOWER 27 FRIEND 7

CHAT

CONTACTS

Friend 1

Friend 2

Friend 1 5 min

Friend 4 1 min

Father 11 min

Mother

RESEARCH

M.

5 DECEMBER 2000

After we shut the Berlin fair down, dad announced that we'd be coming to Lima, Peru, to open another fair. Reinventing oneself is part of the family tradition.

Dad shipped six rides in containers, all the way from Berlin to Lima. By law, we couldn't get any equipment out of Germany. We had loads of debts and the machines served as a guarantee. But my dad convinced the authorities that the six rides were broken and that they were to be repaired in Lima, only to be shipped back.

Dad was the first one to leave Berlin. Then he sent a message saying we could go, that everything was ready, waiting for us.

When we arrived, mum was in shock. Our house was very modest and the ground for the future fair was empty, because the rides hadn't arrived yet. But I was happy. The country looked incredible. At school, I was a hero for being a rich German (the boys thought) and sweet (the girls thought). We were going to open the fair and it was going to be a success. Dad had already thought of a name: Parque de la Asunción (*Park of the Assumption*).

After some time, my mother decided to leave and take us kids with her. She couldn't adapt, she couldn't take it anymore. The episode at the customs had been the last straw: when the containers finally got there, the authorities decided that they weren't going to release the rides all at once, but only one piece a week, instead. The opening date had to

be postponed and money was scarce.

I resented her attitude and decided to stay. If my dad believed it was possible, then it was. We would open the park together.

Dad said that I had everything to be the next director of an amusement park in the family. That filled me with pride.

Dad and I lived like two adventurers. To me, he was the ‘former king of Albania’; I was his ‘sword-swallower’ friend and that was the time of our rule.

BERNARDO

LESSON #1

I watched the exploration of Nara Dreamland, Japan, live. My favourite explorer is Haikyo – a famous ‘ruin hunter’ who mainly explores abandoned amusement parks. It was thrilling. It was a live broadcast and it was unbelievable! Nara is a copy of Disneyland, but had never been authorised by Walt Disney: from the entrance gates to the attractions, passing through the pink castle, the plan of the park, everything’s the same. Even the mascots look like Disney characters! It was built in the 50s by a man who invested all his money in the park. Nara fell into decay when a more modern amusement park was opened, a real Disneyland, in Tokyo. Nara Dreamland closed down in 2006. The park was out of bounds. It was heavily policed and was a risky exploration; one of the most difficult parks to access in the whole world, a magical and sinister, place, full of vegetation getting hold of the machine skeletons left behind. I watched Haikyo throughout the whole thing, but nothing could beat when he climbed onto the fragile skeleton of the roller coaster. Even at a distance it was a memorable experience for me. When he got down, Haikyo was arrested, tried and convicted, as an example for the crowds of urban explorers in Japan. Meanwhile, the park was dismantled and vanished. That was my lesson: don’t waste your chance, before it vanishes altogether.

M.

5 DECEMBER 2000

Our goal was to open the park. With the parts still held up at customs, we could only try to assemble, at least, one ride, which would let us open our doors. That's when we met:

[IMAGE]

DER DEUTSCHE

He was a German guy who had lived in Peru for many years. He approached us because he was interested in investing. With his help, we began to *liberate* more than a part a week.

One night, I got a call from the hospital: my dad had had a heart attack. According to the doctors, he needed an operation. He felt more confident if he were operated in Germany. He put the park in my name, left me his amulet (a medallion with a saint on it) and went back to Germany.

Der Deutsche accompanied me in Lima. Every week we'd go to the customs to liberate some more parts. My dad had his operation in Berlin and was recovering well.

From afar, the Cyclone's silhouette was starting to be visible.

(IMAGE)

ABANDONED ROLLER COASTERS

ABANDONED ROLLER COASTERS

CYCLONE.BLOGSPOT.COM

BERNARDO

MY PROJECT

To visit one abandoned amusement park somewhere in the world, every year.

CARLA

2 AUGUST 1990

My uncle told me that we're going to Berlin to see the capital reunited. I've been in the

library looking for information about the city. There are two places that I really want to go to: the zoo and an amusement park that's in East Berlin. I saw that there's a roller coaster there. I've always wanted to ride one. My mum never let me, she's too scared. But I'm going to take the chance of being with my uncle to ask him whether I can go. Two more weeks and I'll start packing.

ANABELA

16 AUGUST 1973

Dear diary,

Yesterday, I did something crazy and my life changed forever!

After dinner, I faked having a stomach-ache, which forced me to go to bed earlier. I filled the bed with towels, so it looked like there was someone lying there, and, a little before midnight, I sneaked out through the balcony door.

I had already looked into the possibility of doing this, but had never dared try it. The roof of the shed was underneath my balcony. The roof was covered in a zinc plate and I – barefoot and shoes in my hands – wasn't going to make noise. If I fell, the fall wouldn't be that big, even though it looked pretty high from way up there... But love overcomes all obstacles, and I was down in a wink.

I made my way to the Fair, trying to avoid the more straightforward route, so that I wouldn't meet anyone that would tell my grandmother they'd seen me.

When I arrived at the main gate, which was still open to let the last visitors out, I saw him, leaning against the wall, casually smoking a cigarette. He smiled at me, I smiled back and I was sure that I was doing the right thing. Was I? He offered a cigarette. I'd never smoked before – but then I'd never run away from home either! I figured I would try it out. It tasted bad I had a coughing fit, as though I had suddenly swallowed all the smoke from a chimney in the winter. Mummy used to tell me it was dangerous, that I could become 'hooked on it', but turns out 'it' was horrible, and I thought why in the world would anyone want to smoke. He laughed. He laughed a lot. I gave him the cigarette back, feeling slightly sick. If Mummy knew how easy it would be to keep me from smoking, she would have given me a cigarette a long time ago!

He took me by the hand and led me inside the fair. When we arrived at the roller coaster's control cabin, he asked me if I wanted to go for a ride. He asked a colleague of

And, just like the roller coaster ride, another ride was beginning Slowly, at first, then even more slowly, until an abrupt descent, propelled us fearlessly and shamelessly against one another. Every so often, I regained conscience and started doubting and fearing that situation; but I quickly went back to such a big state of emotion, and the ideas would senselessly follow.

~~He xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

He's leaving today. How long will it last, this winter that is just beginning? Will my spring ever come back?

LESSON #2

53

have stood. A roller coaster which was no longer there: an enormous absent monster. At that moment, it became clear that finding the monster would be my goal. The monster was called Cyclone.

When I got back, I made an eerie discovery: the Cyclone had been temporarily set in the field where I used to skate as a kid, in Portugal.. In the '70s (or something).

CARLA

16 AUGUST 1990

I'm leaving. See you when I get back, Dizzy! I hope you stay closed, waiting for me. But if anyone reads you, I'd rather they pretend that they didn't read a thing. I don't care. I'll tell you everything, once I get back. I'm very happy!

[IMAGE]

BERLIN

ANABELA

19 AUGUST 1975

We've lived through the revolution of 25th of April.

Freedom has reached our country, which seems to be going through its teenage years – every day a new revolutionary surprise and, meanwhile, that 'other Virgin-lady' still tells people what to think...

Your pages, dear diary, read, crossed out, censored by my brother, are the proof of that. I imagine him sneakily going through my stuff, looking for you, and then reading you and crossing out your pages. It fills me with disgust...

I never imagined that anyone would have the nerve to prise open my intimate world like that. Let alone my brother. The same person who tears revolutionary phrases from his heart, also tears pages, which he considers too shocking, from my diary, and still has the nerve to say that this censorship was "for my own good". The *ancien régime* is clearly still in force at my house. Luckily, a revolution has happened in my life.

I never heard back from that German guy. He kept my little Our Lady of the Assumption medallion and disappeared. There were no more funfairs around here. It's rather about folk celebrations: saint of this, saint of that, comrades, socialism,

freedom... But I've met a boy. Portuguese. I like him, I have fun with him.
My grandmother is afraid of leaving us alone. Lately, she's been talking to me about the importance of a bride saving herself for her wedding. Saving herself? Where does she save herself, exactly?! In a drawer?!

M.

7 DECEMBER 2000

When I finally finished the Cyclone, I got on the phone to tell my dad. I was proud. I couldn't hold it in. But the phone started to ring right before I even had the chance to dial the number. It was him – my dad!

What he was saying made no sense at all: I needed to dismantle the Cyclone and send the parts back to Germany, one by one. The first one to go was to be the roller coaster's main axis. I just had to follow *der Deutsche's* instructions. They had already discussed and arranged things between themselves.

I tried to interrupt him several times, but he sounded determined.

No explanation, just a harsh, nervy voice, and orders. I was to do it little by little, until there was nothing left and we could sell the land of the former future Parque de la Asunción.

He hung up. I was so angry. After all that investment, all that expectation, were we going to give up?! Did the former king of Albania now want to go home after his five-day reign?!

Was that it?!

No, that wasn't it.

CARLA

2 SEPTEMBER 1990

Dizzy, I'm back.

It feels good to be home. I had never thought I'd say this, but it's true. You'll be totally surprised by what I have to tell you, because nobody could ever have imagined what happened to me in Berlin.

I had thought about bringing a little piece of the Wall with me, as a souvenir, but I didn't manage. Because, in the meantime, the accident happened. But we still managed to do a lot before that. We visited museums, we climbed this really tall tower with an incredible view of the city, we went to the zoo, we visited a neighbourhood on the east side which seemed to be frozen in time, we saw buildings destroyed by World War II, we walked around... It was really intense. So intense, that my uncle thought it was about time that we go spend the day at the amusement park that I wanted to visit. The park's amazing! It's like a fair, but with so much more! It's got a Ferris wheel, a river where we can ride some swans, a medieval English village, an area with life-size (I think) replicas of dinosaurs and other extinct animals, bumper cars, carousels that spin around really quickly and the famous roller coaster I told you about. We went in the morning, had lunch there and left the most exciting thing for last: the Cyclone, the 85-foot tall roller coaster.

When I saw it, I was sure that I didn't want to go on it after all. I told my uncle straight away. But he told me not to be afraid like my mother. He insisted that I would like it and that it was an incredible sensation that I couldn't miss. He repeated that that was 'my' chance. That was when I gave in

My uncle wished me a nice ride.

I was so afraid. Tears were almost bursting out of my eyes.

A girl younger than me sat beside me. She looked at me and smiled nervously. I thought that, maybe, I wasn't alone.

My uncle waved. The man who checked on the belts leaned over me to see if everything was properly fastened. I noticed that he had a little medallion of Our Lady of the Assumption tied around his neck. For real! A little medallion of the Assumption. I thought 'it's a sign, everything's fine; everything's going to be fine.' When I was little, my mum gave me a very similar medallion to that one, so that everything would always be fine. It's a family tradition. But my mum's already lost hers. So, the ride began.

It was a beautiful day. It was hot. We started with a climb.

When we reached the top, I looked down and the abyss was terrible! I closed my eyes, I felt us falling, it was such a real sensation – I had never experienced anything like it.

When I opened my eyes, I saw that the girl by my side was pale with fear. She started to scream. Actually, everyone was screaming!

Everyone but me. I was silent.

We were going so fast, Dizzy. We were leaning to the right and went in for the second

climb. The loop was next.

The girl by my side kept on screaming and I stayed silent. I was so afraid that my body went stiff. I wasn't living any of that. There I was, not wanting to live it. The car entered the loop, started to go up and lose speed. Suddenly, there was light. Literally. A flash and...

Hanging upside down, Dizzy, stopped, fastened by the shoulders and by the waist. It wasn't normal to be stuck there.

Yet, there we were, stuck, upside down.

The question: am I going to fall, are we going to fall? Is this stuck? Will it hold? Am I going to die?

I look at my side: the girl sitting had her hair up in the air and a scared face, in silence. I recognise that fear. She doesn't want to be there, she doesn't want to spin around – much like me, in my own life, not wanting to be there nor spin around.

The girl was ever so blushed, redder...

Suddenly, my house keys slip out of my pocket. There go my house keys, 85 feet in freefall.

I open my mouth, about to say something, and...

We giddily slide down the rails, the ride goes on, I can't believe that the ride is continuing and every inch that we go forward is a relief, a joy. I scream out loud, the girl beside me regains her voice and shouts as well, I'm alive, we're alive and the ride goes on!

Are we ever going to reach the end? Is this going to stop again? I close my eyes, I don't stop screaming, but the train stops, it's already stopped and I keep on screaming. I wake up at the hospital in Berlin. They gave me a tranquilliser. My uncle's by my side. He tells me I'm fine and that I shouldn't worry. He will deal with the legal matters.

Complaints, insurances, compensation... I can only travel in a week's time.

When I arrived, I screamed. When I saw my house, I screamed. When I entered my room, I screamed. And I'm always going to scream from now on. I like screaming. I remember the people from the East screaming as they crossed the Wall to the West. I scream because I'm finally a westerner. The Wall has fallen! The Wall is down!

ANABELA

25 AUGUST 1975

Dear diary,

Your pages, ravaged by my brother, remind me that there's a snitch lurking behind every door. Between my grandmother's fears and my brother's tattletales, there's very little space left for me. Either I give you up, or...

No, this is an act of resistance.

From now on, I'm going to write in German whenever necessary, *ja?* In case you end up in the wrong hands...

*Ist es klar? * Verstehst du was ich meine? * Ja? **

This weekend, my grandparents went to the village. I told them I didn't want to go.

As my brother decided to stay, my grandmother allowed it. But my brother went to yet another protest with his university colleagues and I was left alone with my... *Schatz* *...

My *Schatz* * and I... alone for the first time. We were *allein* * at last, with the house just to ourselves.

Our mouths could now only think about *küssen* * at this point and, all of a sudden, he *hat mich umgarmt* *. When we realised it, we were both *ins Bett* *. We *haben Liebe gemacht* and it was *gut*.*

[IMAGE]

* Ja? Yes?

* Ist es klar? Is it clear?

* Versteht du, was ich meine? Do you know what I mean?

* Schatz Treasure/love

* Allein Alone

* Küssen To kiss

* Hat mich umgarmt He hugged me

* Ins bett In bed

* Haben liebe gemacht We made love

* Gut Good

M.

31 DECEMBER 2000

The day they brought me here, my mother's hair turned all white and she enteredmenopause. She forcibly entered menopause and I forcibly left adolescence. My mother sent me a picture of the two of us, before all this had happened, and told me that I should remember us like that. Me, as a teenager, and her, smiling, as if she were my older sister. A picture taken right before we left Berlin.

Tomorrow I go into the first day of year three. At the end of all this, it will have been twenty years of my life. My dad is getting out today as free man. We have both served two years in prison. Me here, him in Germany. We're on an equal footing when it comes to the time done up until now, though I still have to do eighteen more years. Dad, I've decided to send you this letter with my story in writing, so that you, Heir of the Former King of Albania, do not invent another story that everybody believes, just because you've repeated it so much. I will tell my own story.

I want you to know that I'm no longer a boy and that you're no longer my hero. You've gone from hero to villain. Just like that, no middle ground, like Mum's white hair. A hundred and sixty-seven kilos of cocaine in Cyclone's axis put an end to my adolescence.

Twenty years in jail in Lima. In one of the worst jails in Latin America. I've been thinking a lot about our story and about what happened to us.

Faced with twenty years in jail, my life seems to have passed me by in a second. I watch everything like the firing of a gun in slow motion.

Your finger on the trigger, the bullet tearing through the air, cutting space and shortening the distance between my life and my death. It's your finger and it's my life. Sometimes, I think that I'm going mad, when I get stuck in time which doesn't pass and in the image of your finger pulling the trigger.

Today, you walk free. It's as though that shot had never hit you.

As though, unfairly, it had missed its target. But, all of a sudden, the image starts to change and I see that gun turning towards you and that bullet – which I thought was lost – flies right at your life, not at mine. Because, even though you may be walking free today, you're not free, no matter what you may think. Your son still has 6575 days left to serve, 18 years, which is nothing compared to the rest of your life, Dad.

Your prison is on the inside and it's a life sentence.

I'm freer than you...

Because I forgive you, oh former King of Albania.

BERNARDO

TRUTH OR DARE

I'm here, in Lima, because of the discovery I made in Berlin.

The Berlin park shut down after an incident with the roller coaster, Cyclone, which is no longer there. A German newspaper put that story on its front page. The family who ran the park moved here, to Lima, to open Parque de la Asunción, with the rides, which came by ship. That park never got to open its doors to the public.

In an unexpected turn of events, a huge amount of cocaine was discovered in one of Cyclone's parts. Two members of the family are arrested: father in Germany, and son in Peru.

But the Cyclone is here, practically complete. There's only one piece is missing: the main axis which guarantees its stability. The park is out of bounds.

ANABELA

30 AUGUST 1975

I've done so much for the first time!

I'm different. I feel it.

But, sometimes, I just feel like having much more to try out. Having a whole box of matches to light.

Still having a first time...

What will tomorrow be like?

BERNARDO

LIVE @ PARQUE DE LA ASUNCIÓN

I'm standing in front of the gate of the ghost park. I can see the Cyclone's silhouette a few metres away. It's a real monster of iron and steel. There's barbed wire all around the park.

I'm inside.

I can see the half-finished rides. Like giant jigsaw puzzles, unfinished. Some are

covered in graffiti and look like they've been vandalized. There's vegetation all over the place. Strange noises make me think there are animals hiding in every corner.

I'm approaching the Cyclone.

The structure looks very damaged. I can feel it moving with the wind. An enormous castle made of matches. It's really impressive.

Absolute risk.

I'm going to start climbing.

I take a safe route, parallel to the rails, but I couldn't feel more unsafe.

Each piece of wood that I step on squeaks. I'm giving it all my attention... There are steps missing and pieces of the handrail have come off.

Everything's covered in moss.

Though the rides down there having been vandalised, the only sign of vandalism on Cyclone is the work of nature. There are no signs of anyone having been crazy enough to climb the roller coaster. I will be the first.

Here I am in the middle of the big climb. Everything is swaying more and more. I hold on to the rails in order to look down.

I keep going up: holding the rail harder and harder.

It's getting colder and damper. I can feel the wind. Strong. Everything squeaks and sways. The match castle can crumble at any minute. But I'm not going back.

I'm on top of the Cyclone. I made it! Twenty-six metres high. I'm up here! Down there, I just see a pile of iron and steel.

I don't know how I got here. I don't know how I'm going to get down. I don't know how the story goes on. I don't know if this is what I waited this whole time for.

I don't care.

I could stay here for the rest of my life, if time could stand still. I just care about the present, the truth of being here right now.

[BACK COVER]

M.

Why doesn't time go by?

ANABELA

Dear diary, I'm going to do something crazy!

He's German and he's 24.

CARLA

I just feel like staying home. I just feel like eating and sleeping.

BERNARDO

Next stop: Latin America!

ANNEX 2

CYCLONE: DIARY OF A ROLLER COASTER ORIGINAL VERSION







ESTA EDIÇÃO CONTOU COM OS SEGUINTE APOIOS:



TÍTULO *Ciclone – Diário de Uma Montanha-Russa*

TEXTO Inês Barahona e Miguel Fragata

ILUSTRAÇÕES Mariana Malhão

DIREÇÃO DE ARTE Rui Silva

REVISÃO Nuno Quintas

1.ª EDIÇÃO

janeiro 2019 | coleção Orfeu Mini

COPYRIGHT

texto © 2019 Inês Barahona e Miguel Fragata

ilustrações © 2019 Mariana Malhão

Publicado originalmente por edições Orfeu Negro, Lisboa.

DL

ISBN 978-989-8868-39-8

IMPRESSÃO

Printer Portuguesa

ORFEU NEGRO

Rua Silva Carvalho, n.º 152 – 2.º

1250-257 Lisboa | Portugal | +351 213244170

info@orfeunegro.org | www.orfeunegro.org

CICLONE

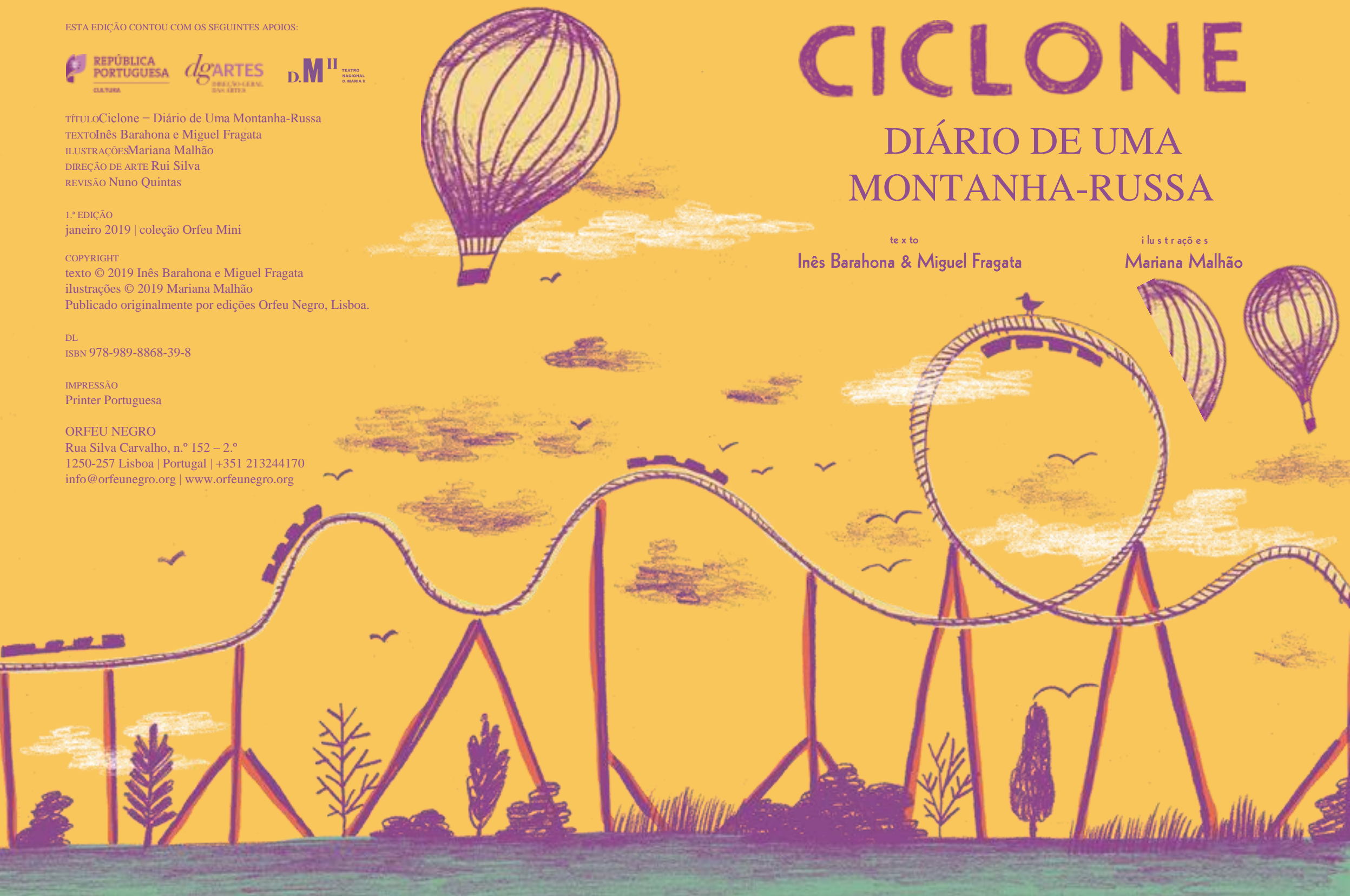
DIÁRIO DE UMA MONTANHA-RUSSA

te x to

Inês Barahona & Miguel Fragata

i l u s t r a ç õ e s

Mariana Malhão





Anabela

5 DE JULHO DE 1973

Querido diário,

Estas férias estão a ser um fastio. Não se passa nada. Estou de férias há meia dúzia de dias e já não aguento esta casa.

A mãezinha não me entende, simplesmente não me entende. Não compreende que tenho apenas dezasseis anos. É verdade, ela nasceu antes de mim, mas o que ela viveu eu já não vou viver! Os tempos mudaram. Estamos em 1973! As coisas evoluíram, e ela não sabe como é ter dezasseis anos em 1973! Ela pertence a outro tempo! Mas isso ela não entende.

Quando será que este verão acaba?



Carla

Carla

5 DE AGOSTO DE 1989

Querido diário,

Acho que deve ser assim que começam todos os diários...
Vi-te na montra da papelaria e não resisti. Ainda por cima, cheiras bem!

Vou fazer o que é costume fazer num diário: eu escrevo e tu ouves.

Tenho treze anos e uma família normal. Tudo corre bem. A não ser eu e a minha mãe, que discutimos por tudo e por nada. E eu e o meu pai, que não nos podemos ver um ao outro. Não sei o que é que a minha mãe viu no meu pai. Mas também não sei o que é que o meu pai viu na minha mãe...

Não me apetece escrever mais nada. Os meus dias têm sido uma seca.

Por hoje é tudo.





Anabela

15 DE JULHO DE 1973

Querido diário,

Como irá ser amanhã? Tomara que seja melhor!

Não tenho escrito nada, porque não se passa rigorosamente nada. É o vazio.

M.

13 DE AGOSTO DE 2000

Decidi começar a escrever este diário, esta carta, para dar voz à minha história, como o meu bisavô fez.

Foi ele quem começou a tradição da família.

A minha família sempre esteve ligada às feiras populares — às diversões, às ilusões. O meu bisavô foi o primeiro.

Ele era alemão. Artista de circo. Um grande ilusionista. Era muito bom a contar a sua própria vida como se fosse uma história.

Começava sempre aos oito anos, altura em que se tinha tornado domador de leões. Depois, raptado por um gangue de ladrões, seguia para África, onde chefiava uma tribo de pigmeus e se casava às escondidas com a filha do imperador da Etiópia.

Parece impossível, mas consta que tudo isto terá mesmo acontecido.

O episódio mais sumarento ficava para o fim: o meu bisavô coroado rei da Albânia. Faz hoje, 13 de agosto de 1913, precisamente 87 anos.

Ele contava que tinha visto no jornal um anúncio invulgar: a Albânia (o país) andava à procura de um príncipe desaparecido para ser o seu líder. E esse príncipe desaparecido era incrivelmente parecido com o meu bisavô. Via-se na fotografia do anúncio! Portanto, decidiu partir para a Albânia, acompanhado pelo seu amigo engolidor de espadas, e tomar posse.

Aí reinou. Explorou o palácio, gastou boa parte do tesouro da coroa e até se atreveu a declarar guerra à Sérvia, só para ver como era. Ao fim de cinco dias, decidiu que já chegava. Foi-se embora.

De regresso à Alemanha, exigiu sempre ser tratado por «o antigo rei da Albânia»:

ehemaliger König von Albanien

Quando morreu, descobriu-se que até tinha esse título no bilhete de identidade. E assim está escrito na sua campa. Não há hoje em dia um único alemão que não acredite nesta história, tal a convicção com que o meu bisavô a defendeu.

Escrevo este diário, esta carta, para que todos acreditem na minha história.





Anabela

11 DE AGOSTO DE 1973

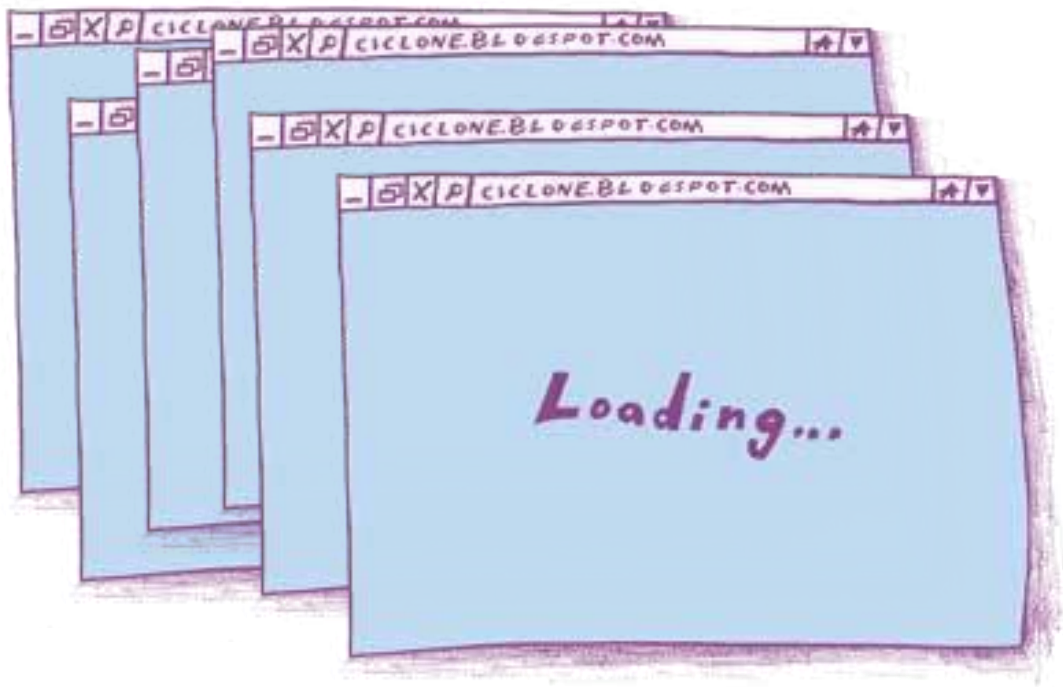
Querido diário,

Nenhum dos amanhãs foi melhor. Todos os dias são iguais: um tédio.

Estas férias estão irremediavelmente P-E-R-D-I-D-A-S.

Aiiiiiiiiii...





Bernardo

PAGE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Decidi criar um blogue.

Um blogue que fosse, tipo, um diário, mas aberto para o mundo inteiro. Sem aquela coisa pirosa do papel que cheira bem e da caneta especial. O digital é o autêntico: what you get is what you see.

Na verdade, nunca tive um diário. Aquela ideia de estar a escrever só para mim nunca me agradou. Acho que não tem interesse nenhum.

Um blogue é completamente diferente. Um blogue existe para dar a ver a vida de uma pessoa. E para isso só é precisovi-fi.

Vai chamar-se ciclone ponto blogspot ponto com.

Anabela

12 DE AGOSTO DE 1973

Querido diário,

Parece que afinal estas férias ainda podem ter remédio.

Recebi um convite para ir à Feira Popular que estão a montar nos Quatro Caminhos. Há lá uma montanha-russa.

A mãezinha diz que posso ir, se o mano me acompanhar. Não é por ele ser mais velho, é por ser rapaz. A mãezinha diz que devo ter cuidado com os rapazes. E depois manda o mano tomar conta de mim! Como são contraditórios, os adultos...

Vou levar um vestido novo, amanhã, para ir à feira. É curto, vou dar show Se chamar a atenção para as minhas pernas, talvez possa desviar a atenção do meu nariz.

Sonhei que o meu nariz ganhava vida própria, com pernas e tudo, e que matava um homem que era o meu futuro marido. O meu nariz estragava-me o casamento! E eu ficava ali, sozinha, sem marido e sem nariz.

Eu sei que não passa de um sonho, mas será que um dia vou encontrar quem vença o meu nariz e queira concentrar-se nas minhas pernas?





M.

14 DE AGOSTO DE 2000

Estive a fazer as contas: 18 anos são 6575 dias.

Carla

12 DE AGOSTO DE 1989

Hoje resolvi dar-te um nome — vai ser Dizzy. Espero que gastes.

Olá, Dizzy, tudo bem?

Comigo é que não... Fui à praia com a minha melhor amiga. Ela disse que o meu fato de banho é um bocado esquisito. Nem voltei mais à piscina por causa disso. Só me apetece ficar em casa. Só me apetece comer (tenho sempre fome) e dormir. E apareceram-me borbulhas nas costas...

Estou mesmo esquisita.



Anabela

13 DE AGOSTO DE 1973

Querido diário,

Hoje, a minha vida mudou para sempre.

Nem sei por onde começar...

Fui à Feira Popular e não tive coragem de andar na montanha-russa...

Por receio de que me julgassem cobarde, joguei a cartada do desinteresse. Disse: «não me interessa», «não acho graça», «não vou andar».

O mano já estava maldisposto porque achou o meu vestido muito curto, ficou ainda mais ofendido com a minha recusa. Afinal, estava ali para tomar conta do grupo, era o mais velho; se eu não fosse, ninguém podia ir... Mas eu convenci-o de que ficaria recatada, junto à Zaida.

Sempre tive um fascínio muito grande pela Zaida da Feira Popular. Só ela sabe responder à pergunta de como irá ser amanhã. Só ela conhece o futuro...

Quando lá estava, junto à Zaida, aproximei-me e pus-lhe uma moeda. Beijei a minha medalhinha da Senhora da Assunção, pedi a Deus que o futuro me fosse favorável e levantei os olhos para o céu.

Foi então que o vi.



Ele estava dentro da cabina de controlo da montanha-russa, diante de um painel cheio de botões luminosos. As luzes incidiam sobre o seu perfil — ora vermelhas, ora azuis, ora laranja. É ele quem carrega no botão. É ele quem comanda. É ele quem faz deslizar jovens e famílias na montanha-russa. Ele é o maestro das voltas e reviravoltas que deixa a multidão em êxtase!

Ele é o deus que move a máquina! (Que Deus me perdoe...)

De repente, voltou-se na minha direção. Baixei os olhos, envergonhada, e então vi o papelinho que saía da Zaida:



Bernardo

CICLONE.BLOGSPOT.COM

Eu sou EU.

Mas é preciso explicar.

Sempre fui viciado em velocidade. Sempre quis devorar o tempo e comer o futuro. Sempre tive pressa.

Mas isso foi antes de ter estado em Pripyat (não sei se é assim que se escreve).

Pripyat é uma cidade inteira, em silêncio. Fica na Ucrânia, muito próxima de Chernobil. É uma cidade tipicamente soviética. Centenas de ruas de traçado geométrico, milhares de apartamentos idênticos em prédios idênticos, todos com um busto de Lenine no centro da sala de estar.

É dia 27 de abril de 1986, domingo, faz sol. Faltam apenas três dias para que o parque de diversões de Pripyat seja inaugurado. Vai ser no Primeiro de Maio, Dia do Trabalhador, com pompa e circunstância.

Mas nesse domingo, ao abrir as janelas das suas casas, os habitantes de Pripyat conseguem ver claramente uma enorme coluna de fumo que sai do reator 4 da central nuclear de Chernobil. O reator está em chamas. Tudo se passa a poucos quilómetros de distância.





Durante as poucas horas em que está aberto, o parque de diversões de Pripjat permite às autoridades encobrir a tragédia. É o direito à festa que mascara uma sentença de morte.

Às pessoas, é dito que tudo está bem e que a abertura do parque será antecipada. Horas depois, a enorme roda-gigante pintada de amarelo começa a girar. As famílias precipitam-se para o parque e formam-se filas junto às bilheteiras.

Nessa mesma tarde, os cinquenta mil habitantes são evacuados de emergência, com a promessa de regresso três dias mais tarde. Trinta anos mais tarde, ainda ninguém voltou.

Desde essa data, dia da explosão na central nuclear, que a cidade está deserta.

Hoje, já se pode visitar a cidade fantasma: há livros abertos nas secretárias, roupas e brinquedos espalhados pelas casas, relógios parados no tempo, pendurados nas paredes.

No entanto, o que se vê não é bem o passado. É a maneira como o presente toma conta do passado, como as plantas crescem no meio do betão, como animais ocupam os espaços deixados vazios, como o vento sopra nos cruzamentos e nas esquinas das ruas desertas.

Visitar Pripjat não é espreitar por uma janela que dá acesso ao passado. Não é resgatar da memória uma pérola intocada do passado. Visitar Pripjat é ver como o presente apaga o passado. Pripjat, como foi, já não está disponível para visita.

É como o meu passado. Também não está disponível para visita. Não é que não me lembre dele. Lembro-me muito bem, mas não quero abrir a janela. O meu passado fica lá atrás. A mim, só me interessa o presente.

Por isso, concentro-me no momento em que a minha vida mudou por completo. No momento em que eu estava ali, parado, no meio da avenida central, de quatro faixas, em que não circulava ninguém.

Lembro-me de começar lentamente a tirar fotografias e a partilhá-las.

Chegam os primeiros likes os primeiros comentários e a pergunta: se eu agora sou EU. Primeiro não percebo: se eu sou EU?... E então, de repente, alguém escreve EU = Explorador Urbano. Eu.

E foi exatamente assim, completamente por acaso, que eu me tornei EU.



M.

16 DE AGOSTO DE 2000

Começo esta carta pelo princípio.

No princípio, os meus pais viajavam pela Europa separados. A minha mãe pela Europa de Leste, com a Catapult. O meu pai com a Ciclone pela Europa do Sul – Itália, Portugal, Espanha... Entretanto eu nasci, nasceram os meus irmãos e as viagens continuaram. Nós com a nossa mãe e o meu pai sempre sozinho. Passei os primeiros anos da minha vida a viajar de país em país, de feira popular em feira popular.

Foi um alívio e uma alegria quando o meu pai anunciou que tinha comprado um parque de diversões em Berlim. Foi quando caiu o Muro. Eu devia ter uns dez ou onze anos, mas lembro-me do discurso no dia da abertura, sobre a tradição familiar... o meu pai orgulhoso a continuar essa tradição... E lembro-me de ele ter contado nesse discurso – mais uma vez – a história do meu bisavô.

Bernardo

CAMPANHAS DE VERÃO

Já estive na Suécia, na Dinamarca, em Espanha, em Itália, na Áustria, na Alemanha e em França. Já fui até à Austrália, e também já andei no Canadá.

Aproveito para viajar mal acabam as campanhas. Sempre de mochila às costas e muito pouco dinheiro no bolso. Apanho boleia e vou para destinos desconhecidos.

Já estive em países onde se falam línguas que não conheço. Já provei coisas muito diversas, com efeitos muito diversos...

Conheci comunidades e estilos de vida sustentáveis, ecológicos, equilibrados, autossuficientes – e suficientes para poder dizer que experimentei de tudo.

Pouca gente percebe isto, mas acho que é importante experimentar para sabermos quem somos.

Ah! As campanhas não têm nada que ver com política! As campanhas são os períodos de colheita durante o verão. Um trabalho sazonal. Sou especialista na apanha de morangos, framboesas, brócolos, maçãs, peras, laranjas, ameixas, ervilhas, batatas e tomate. Vou e venho por períodos curtos. Tenho a escola nos intervalos. É assim que organizo as minhas expedições. O meu projeto é visitar todos os anos um parque de diversões abandonado algures no mundo. Próximo destino: América Latina!

Carla

14 DE AGOSTO DE 1989

Dizzy,

A minha mãe diz que tenho de usar sutiã. Eu não quero usar sutiã. Houve mulheres que queimaram sutiãs para que as mulheres não tivessem de usar sutiã!

Toda a gente diz que estou uma verdadeira adolescente. Mas, de cada vez que oiço a palavra, parece que toda a gente começa a olhar para os sítios do meu corpo em que mudei e fico cheia de vergonha.

O que é que se passa comigo, Dizzy?

O que é que se passa comigo?

Alguém me diz, afinal:

O que é que se passa comigo?

Quem é esta pessoa em que agora me transformei? Parece que estou do avesso... A minha cabeça não para, mas o mundo parece sempre igual, repete-se da mesma maneira todos os dias.

Já me ensinaram toda a teoria sobre o que está a acontecer com o meu corpo, as hormonas, as alterações físicas...

Mas porque é tudo inconstante? O meu pai diz que tão depressa parece que estou num velório, como de repente é Carnaval. Mas para mim é tudo uma confusão. Passei a ter muito sono e muita fome, muita zanga e ataques de riso.

Não quero tomar decisões nenhuma. E queria que estas emoções que sinto desaparecessem. Só quero voltar a ser eu. E que tudo volte a ser simples.

Porque é que nada pode ser simples?





Anabela

13 DE AGOSTO DE 1973

Querido diário,

Hoje a mãezinha pediu-me para lhe fazer recados. Fui à farmácia, depois fui à mercearia e, finalmente, fui ao café. Assim que entrei, vi-o! O rapaz da Feira Popular! O meu coração parecia saltar-me do peito. Ele encarou-me e falou para mim! Perguntou-me se eu não tinha estado na Feira Popular. Ele reparou em mim! A Zaida tinha razão! Só isto já foi uma primavera...

Ele é alemão. Tem vinte e quatro anos e já é dono de uma montanha-russa: a Ciclone! É muito simpático. Fala uma mistura de espanhol, francês e inglês, apesar de ser alemão. Viaja com a Ciclone de país em país. E, como me disse que se ia embora dentro de dias, convidou-me para uma volta grátis, amanhã, depois de a feira fechar ao público, à meia-noite.

Será isto verdade?!



Passei o dia a tentar imaginar como vai ser! Tenho de convencer a mãezinha a deixar-me ir. Nem tive tempo para pensar no medo que tenho de andar na montanha-russa! Eu só penso nele! Não sou dona das minhas decisões, tudo o que faço, faço por ele! Quero lá saber se arruino a minha vida!

Aiiiiiiiiii...

Bernardo

FAQ

A minha preferida:

Que história é essa de «exploração urbana»?

A resposta óbvia:

É andar à procura de alguma coisa em lugares abandonados.

E a pergunta seguinte:

Mas à procura de quê?

A resposta varia consoante o destinatário:

a) Um sentido para a vida.

b) Emoção.

c) Adrenalina.

d) Sei lá!

Os insistentes prosseguem:

Mas porquê em lugares abandonados?

Lá desencanto uma resposta poética:

São lugares cheios de segredos.

Então ouve-se a voz da razão:

Mas isso não é invasão de propriedade alheia?

Mas eu tenho resposta pronta!

Há regras: «Não tires mais do que fotografias, não deixes mais do que pegadas.»

Segue o desmancha-prazeres...

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Já pensaste nas consequências?

E outro...

Achas que isso tem futuro?

E outro...

Mas porque é que não paras com isso?

E outro...

Mas qual é o interesse?

Eles não param, nem consigo responder...

Porque é que não fazes antes outra coisa com a tua vida?

Eu já a desesperar...

Achas que é assim que o mundo funciona?

E a machadada final:

Achas mesmo que sabes alguma coisa sobre a vida?

Até que entra na discussão a mãe, o pai, a tia, o avô,
o professor, a amiga...

Onde é que estiveste ontem à noite?

Onde é que estiveste ontem à noite?

Onde é que estiveste ontem à noite?

Onde é que estiveste ontem à noite?

Onde é que estiveste ontem à noite?

Eu grito:

Fim de FAQ!



Anabela

15 DE AGOSTO DE 1973

Querido diário,

Hoje fui à missa com a mãezinha e com o mano. Foi a festa da Assunção de Nossa Senhora. Foi bom para aliviar da discussão de ontem à noite com a mãezinha. O meu pai nunca gostou que lhe chamasse «mãezinha», mas que me importa? Quem me criou foi ela, a minha avó. Mal ou bem, foi quem passou a ocupar o lugar de mãe.

A mãezinha repreendeu-me pelo vestido curto. O mano contou-lhe... Ela diz que, para aprender, não volto à Feira Popular.

A mãezinha não entende o que é ter dezasseis anos e não ter mãe! Além disso, os tempos mudaram. Estamos em 1973! As coisas evoluíram! Não posso voltar à Feira Popular por causa de um vestido?!

Isto não é um castigo, é um inverno escuro e sombrio que se estenderá sobre mim até ao fim dos meus dias! Não acredito que a Zaida mentiu! Ela disse que a primavera não tardava, mas o que vem aí é mais inverno. Como é que, depois de o ter visto, de lhe ter falado, vou sobreviver sem lá voltar? A minha vida mudou desde que o vi! Se não posso ir à Feira, se não o vou encontrar mais, o que me resta? Não vejo saída... Se me prenderem nesta casa uma semana, fecho-me na cozinha e ligo o gás!

Vou fazer uma loucura.



Bernardo

SAIR DE CASA, FICAR EM CASA



A minha ida a Pripyat foi uma espécie de batismo da exploração urbana. Sem saber, fui pela primeira vez um explorador.

As pessoas podem pensar que só quem está fixado no passado, no abandono, gosta de explorar. Mas a verdade é que explorar é descobrir o presente.

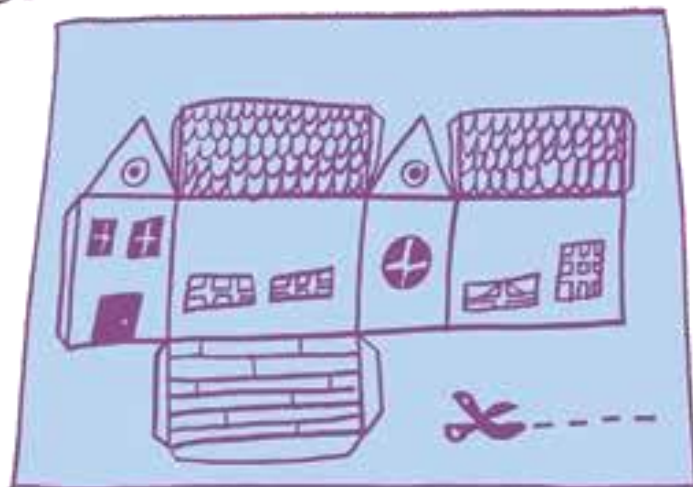
O abandono é o presente. No passado dos lugares que exploro não havia abandono, havia vida.

Vivemos sempre rodeados de coisas, de informação, de velocidade.

O tempo é cheio, cheio, cheio. Nunca temos silêncio.

Quando exploro e chego a um lugar abandonado, parece que estou fora do tempo. É esquisito. Um choque. Os sítios parecem cenários, não parecem de verdade. Às vezes, penso que ali tudo é possível.

CONSTRÓI A TUA PRÓPRIA CASA:



CORTA
PELA LINHA
QUE QUISERES
MAS NÃO
TE CORTES!

Estou num momento da minha vida em que o passado está finalmente a desaparecer, em ruínas.

A pedra parte, o ferro oxida, a água evapora.

Qualquer dia, faço uma exploração até lá. Por agora, exploro outros lugares.

Os Japoneses chamam à exploração qualquer coisa como «caça às ruínas». Sou um caçador de ruínas.

A maior parte da minha vida passou-se em discussões permanentes entre pais muito diferentes. Não me lembro de eles sonharem em comum, apesar de me dizerem os dois que sou fruto do único sonho que tiveram em conjunto.

Sempre que um quis alguma coisa, o outro quis o contrário. Começou a ser frequente um deles chegar a casa e o outro partir. Mas o pior foi ter começado a ser um jogo nas mãos deles.

Tudo o que eu queria tinha oposição de um e apoio do outro. As minhas más escolhas eram culpa de um, ou de outro. As minhas boas escolhas eram por eu ser igualzinho a um ou igualzinho ao outro, diziam-me em segredo. Queriam que lhes contasse o que o outro me dizia em segredo. Queriam que eu seguisse as pisadas do meu avô paterno, ou da minha avó materna. Queriam que cortasse o cabelo assim ou assado, que usasse camisas e calças ou calções — ao gosto de cada um.

Sempre que isto acontecia, transformava-me no famoso homem-bala do circo, lançado de dentro de um canhão, sabe-se lá para onde.

Eles, os domadores de feras, brandiam o chicote. Eu fazia piruetas que invariavelmente não lhes agradavam.

A minha mãe queria que eu estudasse mais — para ser o quê, logo se veria. O meu pai queria que eu agarrasse em mim e me fizesse à vida — fosse lá isso o que fosse.

Mas nunca ninguém me perguntou o que eu queria.





Assim que fiz dezasseis anos, decidi que já chegava. Não fiquei nem com um, nem com outro. Com o dinheiro que já tinha começado a juntar das campanhas e de outros biscates que vou fazendo, reduzindo as minhas necessidades ao mais básico (saco-cama e mochila), fui viver com colegas que partilhavam casa. Neste momento, tenho já três sítios diferentes onde moro, consoante os períodos do ano. Quando não tenho onde ficar, vou para casa dos meus tios, que não têm filhos, e que sempre me abriram as portas.

É assim há dois anos, e já nem me lembro bem de a minha vida ser de outra maneira. Por enquanto, ainda preencho nos papéis oficiais a morada da minha mãe, mas em breve serei maior de idade e isso vai acabar.

Carla

9 DE NOVEMBRO DE 1989

Dizzy,

Hoje foi um dia histórico, sabes? Caiu o Muro de Berlim. As duas metades da Alemanha reuniram-se. Já viste, Dizzy? Um país cortado ao meio, duas metades sem se falarem, sem contacto, durante sei lá quanto tempo... o tempo de uma guerra fria... A Europa dividida ao meio por uma cortina de ferro...

Dentro de mim também caíram muros, hoje.

Mas sinto que fiquei dividida em dois lados diferentes. Estou aqui, no presente. Só que a minha voz ficou do outro lado, no passado. Estou em silêncio aqui e aos gritos do outro lado. A minha vida entrou numa guerra fria, gelada!

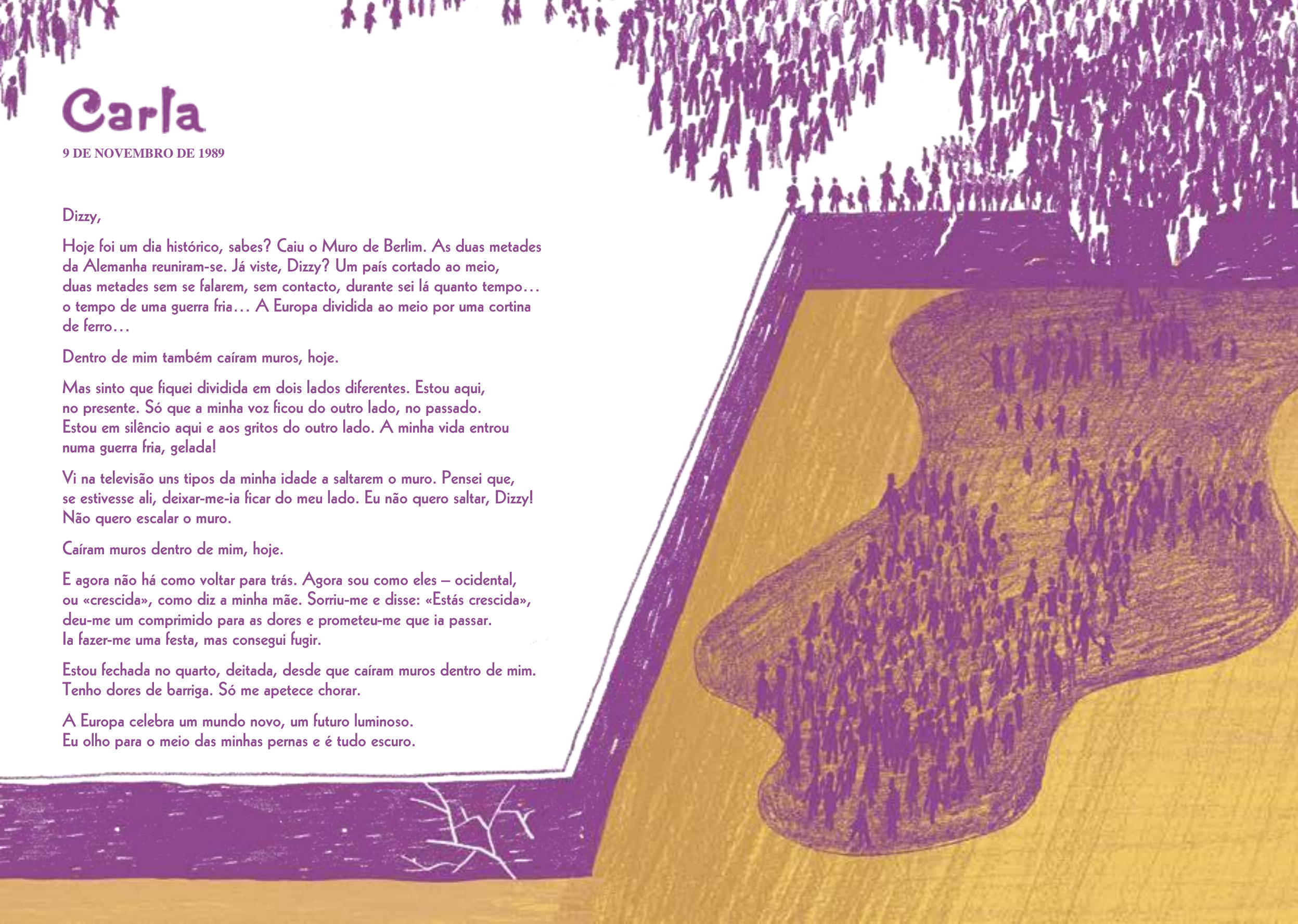
Vi na televisão uns tipos da minha idade a saltarem o muro. Pensei que, se estivesse ali, deixar-me-ia ficar do meu lado. Eu não quero saltar, Dizzy! Não quero escalar o muro.

Caíram muros dentro de mim, hoje.

E agora não há como voltar para trás. Agora sou como eles — ocidental, ou «crescida», como diz a minha mãe. Sorriu-me e disse: «Estás crescida», deu-me um comprimido para as dores e prometeu-me que ia passar. Ia fazer-me uma festa, mas consegui fugir.

Estou fechada no quarto, deitada, desde que caíram muros dentro de mim. Tenho dores de barriga. Só me apetece chorar.

A Europa celebra um mundo novo, um futuro luminoso. Eu olho para o meio das minhas pernas e é tudo escuro.





M.

19 DE AGOSTO DE 2000

Tenho boas memórias do tempo que passámos no parque, em Berlim. Lembro-me de dar beijos no comboio fantasma, de ser apanhado a fumar, pela minha mãe, na cabina da roda-gigante, de espreitar os visitantes em ângulos que só eu conhecia...

Mas depois começaram as avarias constantes. Primeiro foi a Ciclone. Um escândalo, jornais, processos, indemnizações... Depois, foram as outras atrações.

Abriram parques mais modernos, mais voltados para o futuro. E os jovens de Leste, depois de atravessar o Muro, precisavam do futuro. Desesperadamente.

O nosso parque de diversões em Berlim fechou. Já não tínhamos lugar.

Nós éramos o passado.

Carla

10 DE JUNHO DE 1990

Dizzy,

Desculpa ter passado tantos meses sem escrever. Hoje tinha mesmo de o fazer: hoje, foi um dia terrível.

A minha mãe deu-me as chaves de casa e eu tive um ataque de choro. A sério, Dizzy, chorei imenso!

Não quero ter as chaves de casa, não quero abrir a porta. É difícil explicar... Porque é que ninguém me compreende, porque é que ninguém me ouve, nem vê, como sou de verdade?...

Sei que para a maioria das pessoas é ótimo ter as chaves de casa, mas eu não sou como a maioria das pessoas. Não quero que a minha mãe se aproxime com aquele seu sorrisinho idiota para me dizer como estou crescida. Não quero estar crescida. Quero estar como estou. Não sei o que me deu. Depois fiquei muito embaraçada por estar a chorar, ainda chorei mais, fechei-me no quarto e bati com a porta atrás de mim.

Acho que ter a chave de casa é dizer que vou atravessar o muro. E eu não quero estar deste lado. Quero continuar do outro lado. Quero voltar para trás. E sei que a consciência de tudo isto significa que estou a entrar numa idade em que isso não é possível. Mesmo que eu não queira avançar, avanço. E eu não quero.

Não jantei. Há pouco, a minha mãe trouxe-me umas torradas. Perguntou-me se estava melhor, e eu encolhi os ombros. Não sei por que razão agora encolho os ombros tantas vezes. Dá-me jeito. Não preciso de dizer nada.

Vou dormir. Boa noite, Dizzy.





Bernardo

UMA MEMÓRIA

De toda a minha infância, há uma memória que guardo. A minha eterna paixão, quase obsessiva, por montanhas-russas. Sempre o vício da velocidade, da vertigem. Sempre a pressa. O limite.

Sempre achei que, se fosse uma máquina, seria uma montanha-russa.

Carla

9 DE JULHO DE 1990

Querido Dizzy,

Como as minhas notas foram boas, a minha mãe diz que posso ir de férias com o meu tio.

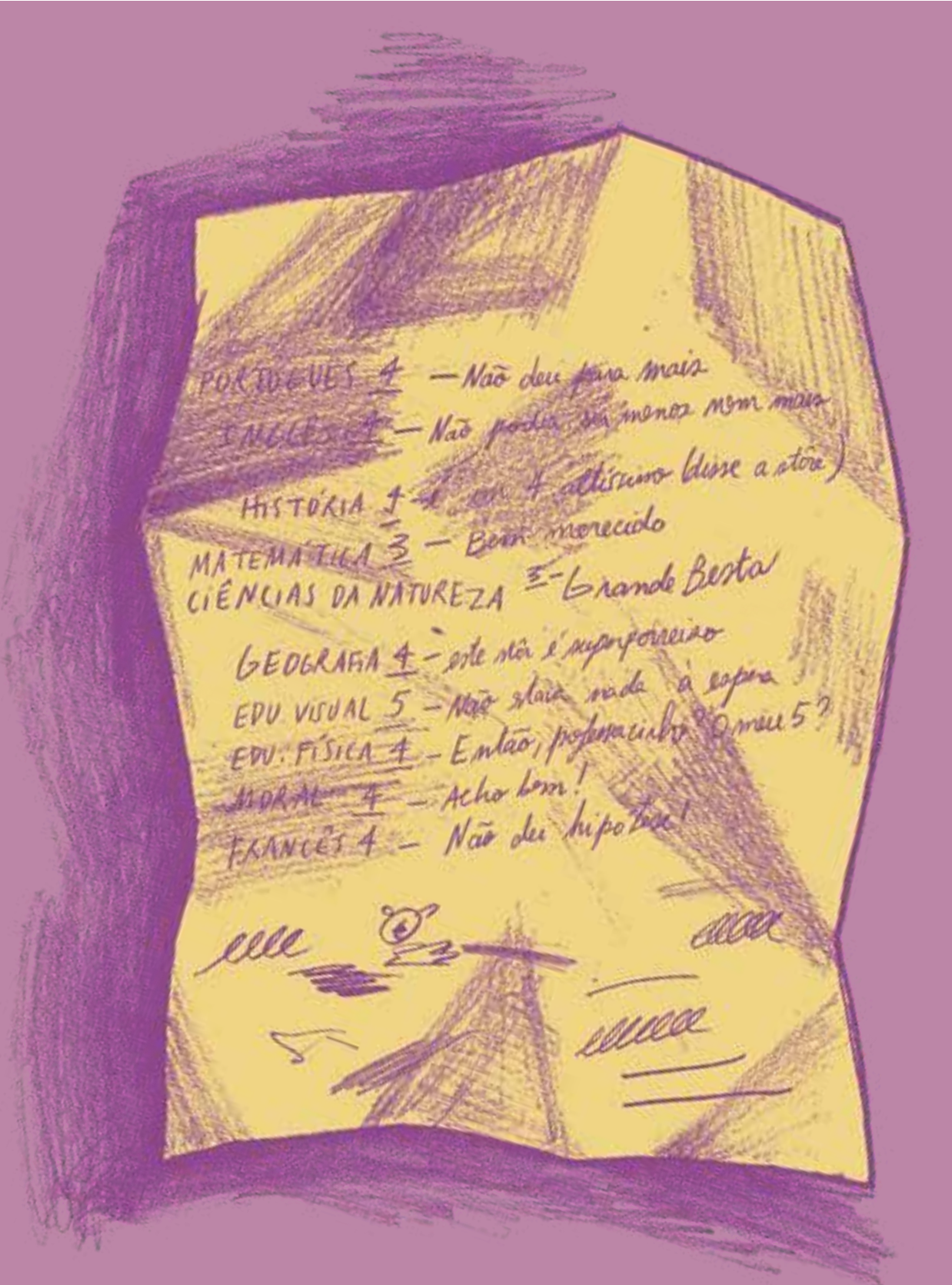
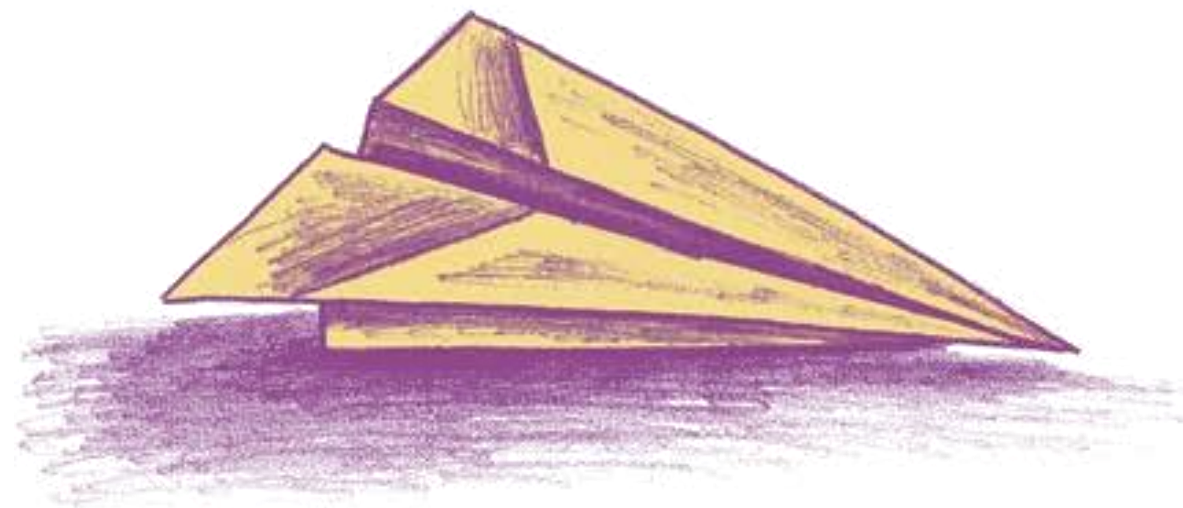
Adoro o meu tio.

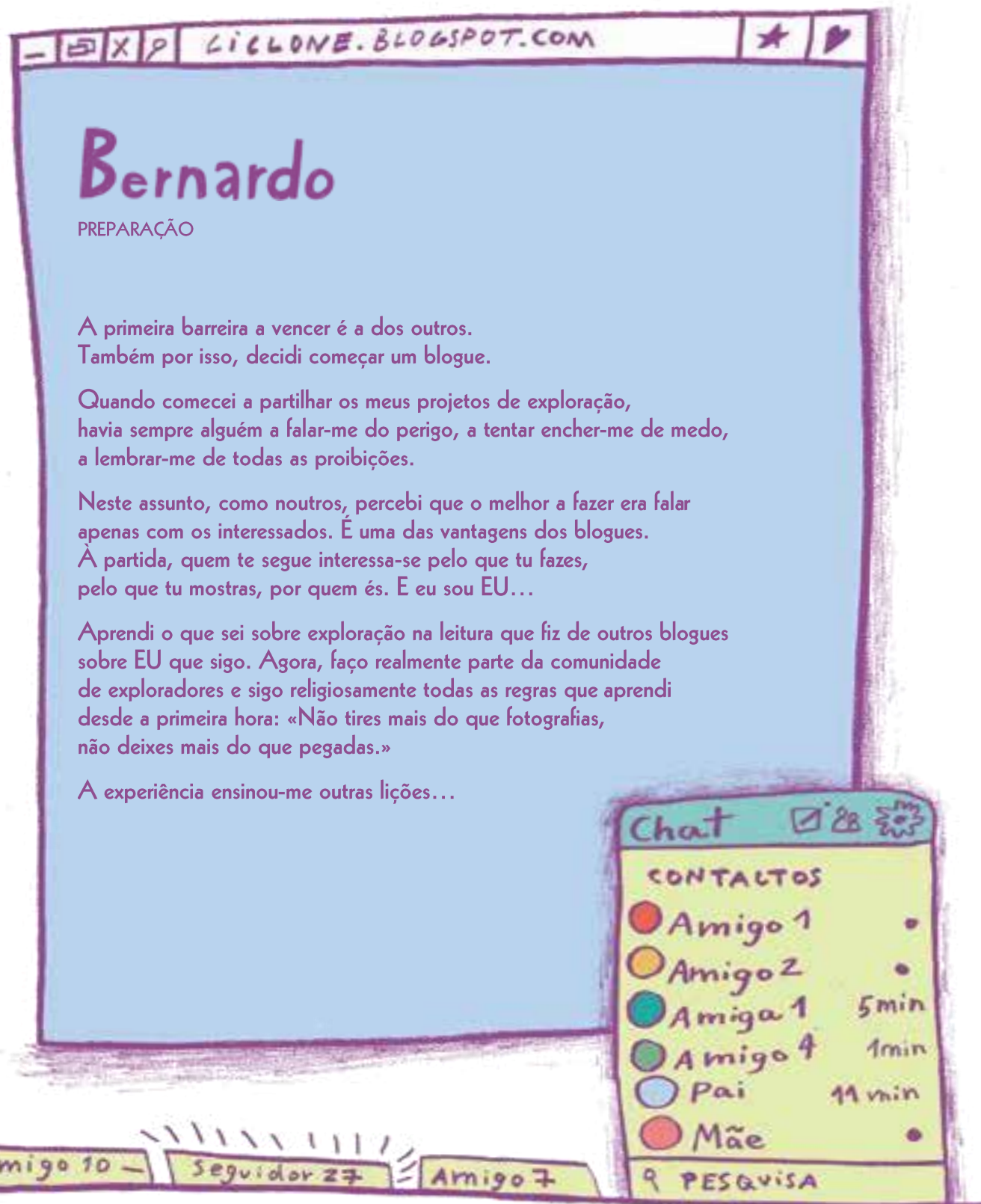
Não percebo como é que o meu tio, que também foi criado pela avó, pode ser tão mais aberto, tão mais moderno, tão mais capaz de perceber o tempo que vivemos do que a minha mãe. A minha mãe diz que não se davam bem. Pudera! Ela toda cheia de limitações e ele de mente aberta — não podia dar certo!

O meu tio compreende-me. Ele, sim. Tenho pena que viva longe, senão pedia-lhe para me adotar.

O momento mais aguardado do meu ano é quando ele me leva de férias. Só nós os dois. E é o que vai acontecer este verão!

De qualquer maneira, vou ter de aguentar até ao final de agosto.





M.

5 DE DEZEMBRO DE 2000

Depois de fecharmos o parque em Berlim, o meu pai anunciou que vínhamos para Lima, no Peru, abrir um novo parque.

Reinventar-se faz parte da tradição da família.

O meu pai enviou seis atrações em contentores, de barco, de Berlim para Lima. Por lei, não podíamos tirar da Alemanha material nenhum. Tínhamos bastantes dívidas e as máquinas serviam de garantia. Mas o meu pai convenceu as autoridades de que as seis atrações estavam avariadas e que era em Lima que iam ser reparadas para depois regressarem.

O meu pai foi o primeiro a deixar Berlim. Depois mandou mensagem a dizer que podíamos seguir, que estava tudo pronto à nossa espera.

Quando chegámos, a minha mãe ficou em estado de choque. A nossa casa era bastante modesta e o terreno do futuro parque estava vazio, porque as atrações ainda não tinham chegado. Mas eu sentia-me feliz. O país parecia-me incrível. Na escola, eu era um herói, por ser um alemão rico (achavam eles) e lindo (achavam elas). Íamos abrir o parque e ia ser um sucesso. O meu pai até já tinha pensado num nome: Parque de la Asunción.

Ao fim de algum tempo, a minha mãe decidiu ir-se embora e levar-me a mim e aos meus irmãos com ela. Ela não se adaptava, não aguentava mais. A gota de água tinha sido o episódio com a alfândega: quando finalmente os contentores chegaram à alfândega, as autoridades decidiram que não iam libertar as atrações de uma só vez, mas apenas uma peça por semana. A data de abertura tinha de ser adiada e o dinheiro começava a faltar.

Indignei-me com a atitude da minha mãe e decidi ficar. Se o meu pai acreditava que era possível, era possível. Juntos, íamos abrir o parque.

O meu pai dizia que eu tinha tudo para poder ser o próximo diretor de um parque de diversões na família. Aquilo enchia-me de orgulho.

Eu e o meu pai vivíamos como dois aventureiros. Ele era para mim «o antigo rei da Albânia», eu era o seu amigo «engolidor de espadas» e aquele era o tempo do nosso reinado.



Bernardo

LIÇÃO #1

Segui em direto a exploração a Nara Dreamland, no Japão. O meu explorador favorito é o Haikyo — um famoso «caçador de ruínas», que explora sobretudo parques de diversões abandonados.

Foi emocionante. Transmitiu-me foi incrível!

Nara é uma cópia da Disney, mas que nunca foi autorizada por Walt Disney: dos portões de entrada às atrações, passando pelo castelo cor-de-rosa, incluindo a planta do parque, é tudo igualzinho. Mesmo as mascotes parecem personagens da Disney! É uma construção dos anos 50, de um homem que investiu todo o dinheiro no parque.

Nara entrou em decadência quando abriu um parque de diversões, mais moderno, um parque Disney autêntico, em Tóquio. Nara Dreamland encerrou em 2006.

O parque foi interditado. Era altamente policiado e uma exploração arriscada, um dos parques de mais difícil acesso no mundo inteiro, lugar mágico e sinistro, cheio de vegetação a tomar conta do esqueleto das máquinas que ainda restavam.

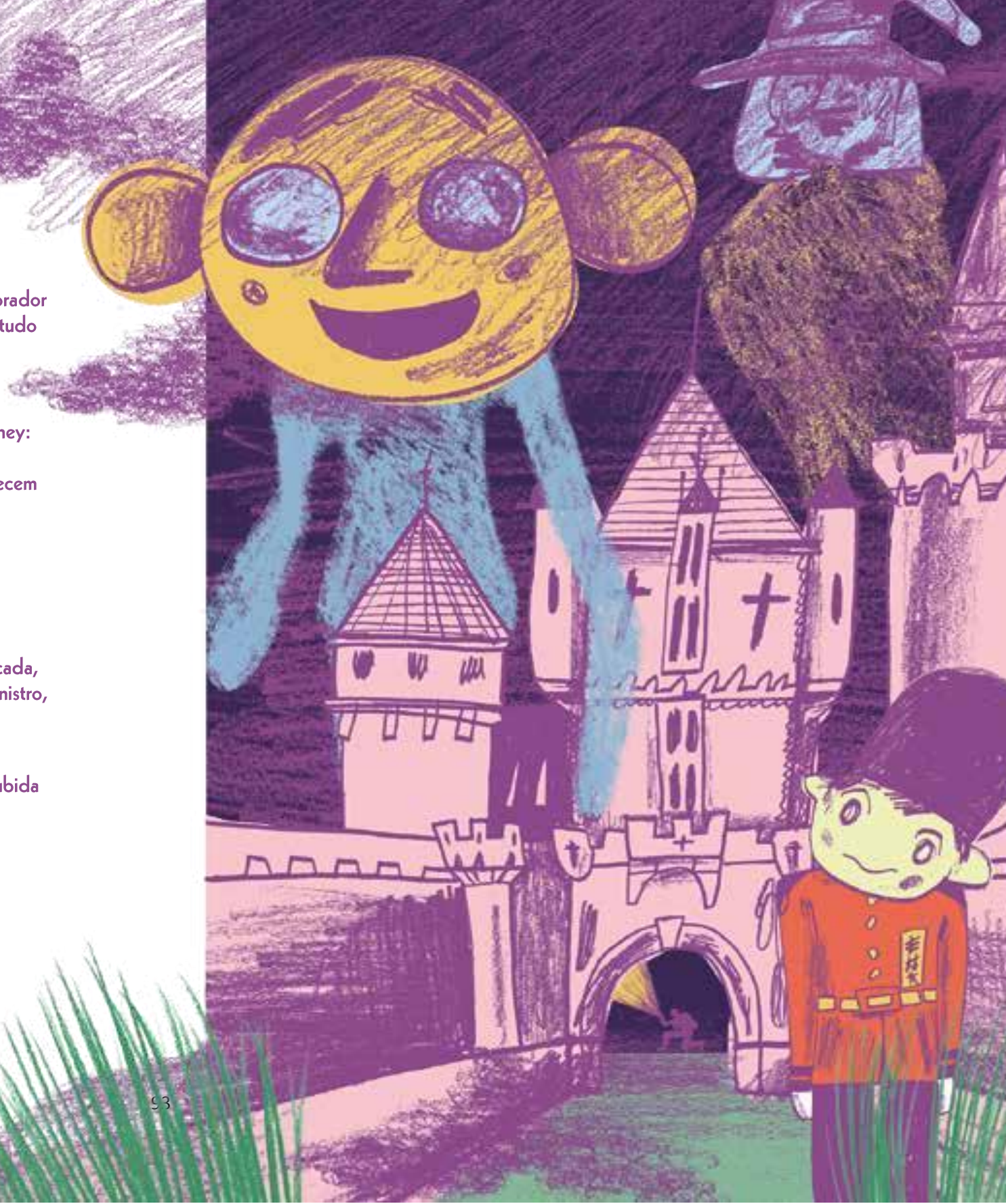
Acompanhei o Haikyo durante todo o percurso, mas nada suplantou a subida ao frágil esqueleto da montanha-russa.

Mesmo à distância, foi uma experiência memorável para mim.

O Haikyo foi preso na descida, julgado e condenado, como exemplo para a multidão de exploradores urbanos que o Japão tem.

Entretanto, o parque foi desmantelado e desapareceu.

Essa foi a minha lição: antes que desapareça por completo, não perder a oportunidade.



M.

5 DE DEZEMBRO DE 2000

O nosso objetivo era abrir o parque. Com as peças presas na alfândega, só nos restava tentar montar pelo menos uma única atração que nos permitisse abrir portas. Foi então que conhecemos:

DER
DEUTSCHE

Era um alemão radicado no Peru havia muitos anos. E abordou-nos porque tinha interesse em investir. Com a ajuda dele, começamos a conseguir libertar mais de uma peça por semana.

Certa noite, ligaram-me do hospital: o meu pai tinha tido um ataque de coração. Segundo os médicos, precisava de ser operado. E ele sentia-se mais confiante se fosse operado na Alemanha. Pôs o parque em meu nome, deixou-me o seu amuleto (a medalha de uma santa qualquer) – e regressou à Alemanha.

Der Deutsche acompanhava-me em Lima. Todas as semanas íamos à alfândega libertar mais peças. O meu pai foi operado em Berlim e recuperava bem. Ao longe, começava a ser visível a silhueta da Ciclone.



Carla

2 DE AGOSTO DE 1990

O meu tio contou-me que vamos a Berlim ver a capital reunida. Estive na biblioteca a pesquisar informações sobre a cidade. Há dois sítios onde quero mesmo ir: ao jardim zoológico e a um parque de diversões que fica em Berlim Leste. Vi que há lá uma montanha-russa. Sempre quis andar numa montanha-russa. A minha mãe nunca deixou, tem muito medo. Mas vou aproveitar que estou com o meu tio para pedir. Mais duas semanas e começo a fazer as malas.

Anabela

16 DE AGOSTO DE 1973

Querido diário,

Ontem fiz uma loucura! E a minha vida mudou para sempre!

Depois do jantar, fingi ter uma dor de barriga que me obrigou a deitar mais cedo. Enchi a cama de toalhas, de modo a dar a impressão de ali estar deitada, e pouco antes da meia-noite esgueirei-me pela porta da varanda do meu quarto.

Eu já tinha estudado a possibilidade, mas nunca me atrevera a experimentá-la. Por baixo da minha varanda, fica o telheiro da arrecadação. O telheiro é coberto por uma chapa de zinco e eu, de pés descalços e sapatos na mão, não faria muito barulho. Se caísse, a queda não seria grande, embora de lá de cima me parecesse altíssimo... Mas o amor tudo pode. E, num abrir e fechar de olhos, estava no chão.

Dirigi-me para a Feira Popular, procurando evitar o caminho mais direto, para não encontrar ninguém que pudesse dizer à minha avó que me vira. E, ao chegar à porta principal, ainda aberta para deixar sair os últimos visitantes, vi-o, encostado ao muro, a fumar um cigarro, descontraidamente. Sorriu-me e eu sorri de volta, e tive a certeza de estar a fazer a coisa certa. Estaria?

Ofereceu-me um cigarro. Eu nunca tinha fumado um cigarro. Mas também nunca tinha fugido de casa! Resolvi experimentar. Soubes-me mal. Tive um ataque de tosse como se de repente tivesse engolido todo o fumo de uma chaminé no inverno. A mãezinha dizia-me que era perigoso, que poderia ficar logo «agarrada àquilo», mas afinal «aquilo» era horrível e pensei que não sabia como alguém haveria de querer fumar. Ele riu-se. Ele ria-se muito. Devolvi-lhe o cigarro e tive uma ligeira indisposição. Se a mãezinha soubesse como era fácil impedir-me de fumar, há muito que me teria dado um cigarro a experimentar!

Ele pegou-me na mão e levou-me para dentro da Feira Popular. Quando chegámos junto da cabina de controlo da montanha-russa, perguntou-me se eu queria andar.

Pedi a um colega para operar a máquina e lá entrámos, sozinhos, para uma viagem. Eu levava a minha saia rodada com flores e uma camisa branca. Foi um pouco idiota da minha parte. Com a fuga de casa, a camisa ficou toda manchada.

A viagem começou, primeiro lenta, depois ainda mais lenta, numa subida acentuada que fazia escorregar a minha saia até quase à cintura. Lá em cima, a antecipação da descida encheu-me de um tal terror que desatei a gritar. Ele, a rir, deu-me a mão, puxou-me contra si e apoiou a minha cabeça no ombro dele, enquanto eu fechava os olhos. Novo abrandamento, nova subida. Eu não tirava a cabeça do seu ombro e continuava de olhos fechados.

Voltou-se na minha direção. O comboio abrandou para uma nova subida. Olhei para ele e foi então que aconteceu: ele beijou-me! Sim, beijou-me! Lábios contra lábios... E eu derreti.

A todo o instante ouvia as palavras da minha avó a dizer-me que tinha de ter muito cuidado com os rapazes. Mas com ele sentia-me segura! Não queria que aquele beijo terminasse e, de seguida, fui eu a procurar a boca dele.

A carruagem parou. Ele riu-se. Outra vez. Voltou a ajudar-me e depois ele ajudou-me a sair e foi à cabina desligar tudo. Eu limitava-me a segui-lo.

Fomos até à sua rulote. Ele apresentou-me «a sua casa».

Ficámos em silêncio durante algum tempo. Depois, ele disse-me que ia partir no dia seguinte. E que provavelmente nunca mais voltaria... Não consegui conter as lágrimas. Desatei a chorar, soluçava mesmo! Porque me fora eu apaixonar por alguém que partia assim, para sempre? Era isto, afinal, o amor? Uma primavera curta a que se sucede um inverno eterno?

O parque ia ficando silencioso, as luzes iam desaparecendo aos poucos, cada vez menos pessoas passavam por ali. Caímos nos braços um do outro. Eu sabia que, depois de ele ter carregado aquele botão e iniciado aquela viagem, não haveria modo de a travar.

Senti que as mãos dele subiam as minhas pernas, depois as minhas costas, que tocavam o meu pescoço, *clá clá clá clá clá*, os meus braços, que os seus dedos se esticavam delicadamente na direcção do meu peito... Eu parecia

Eu não sei como descrever o que sentia, era tudo tão rápido, limitava-me a imitar os seus beijos, não queria que ele me julgasse demasiado inexperiente, mas a verdade é que nunca beijara um rapaz, nunca estivera naquela situação, não sabia onde pôr as minhas mãos, não sabia em que momento deveria parar — na verdade, eu não queria parar. Eu sei, talvez tenha sido precipitado, talvez eu me devesse ter recatado um pouco mais, mas eu estava incapaz de tomar uma decisão, estava completamente tomada por aquela excitação do momento.

Foi então que p... assim.

Eu não sei como descrever o que sentia, era tudo tão rápido, limitava-me a imitar os seus beijos, não queria que ele me julgasse demasiado inexperiente, mas a verdade é que nunca beijara um rapaz, nunca estivera naquela situação, não sabia onde pôr as minhas mãos, não sabia em que momento deveria parar — na verdade, eu não queria parar. Eu sei, talvez tenha sido precipitado, talvez eu me devesse ter recatado um pouco mais, mas eu estava incapaz de tomar uma decisão, estava completamente tomada por aquela excitação do momento.

E, à semelhança da viagem na montanha-russa, outra viagem começara. Primeiro lentamente, depois ainda mais lentamente, até que uma descida abrupta nos lançou sem receios nem vergonha um contra o outro. De vez em quando ganhava consciência e começava a ter dúvidas e a temer aquela situação, mas depressa regressava a um estado de emoção tão grande que as ideias se sucediam sem qualquer nexo, sem qualquer sentido.

As horas passaram-se e de repente sobressaltei-me. Disse-lhe que tinha de ir. Dei-lhe um beijo de despedida e deixei-lhe a minha medalhinha da Nossa Senhora da Assunção.

Ele...

Durante todo o percurso o meu coração aos saltos, as pernas a tremerem-me... O medo que se visse, que de algum modo se percebesse, que eu agora já não sou a mesma.

Entrei no quarto pela janela e olhei em redor. Estava tudo na mesma.

Hoje, foi difícil manter a calma. Ninguém desconfia de nada. Mas parece que o mano me olha de uma maneira estranha.

Ele parte hoje. Quanto tempo durará o inverno que agora se inicia? Alguma vez chegará de novo a minha primavera?

Bernardo

LIÇÃO # 2

A primeira exploração que fiz fora do país foi ao Spreepark, em Berlim.
A euforia era total. Fomos durante a noite, eu e um grupo de exploradores.
Levamos luvas e lanternas, umas botas todo-o-terreno e uns capuzes pretos.

Dessa experiência, o mais marcante não foi saltar a vedação do parque, nem ver aquele cenário mórbido: carrinhos de choque destruídos, carrosséis invadidos por vegetação, cisnes ferrugentos, uma roda-gigante que chiava com o vento — nem sequer foi fugir da polícia e dos cães...

O mais marcante foi encontrar os alicerces onde terá assentado uma montanha-russa. Uma montanha-russa que já não estava lá: um monstro enorme, ausente.

Naquele momento tornou-se evidente que encontrar o monstro seria o meu objetivo. O monstro chama-se Ciclone.

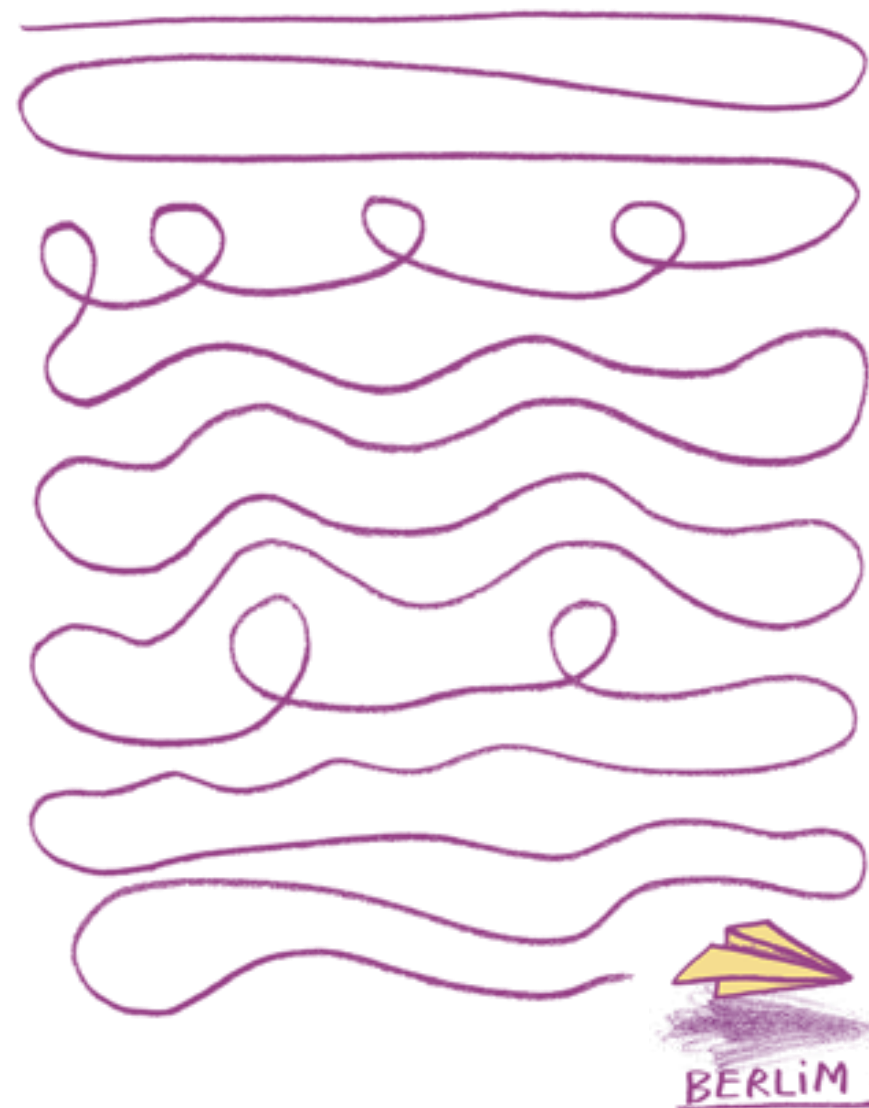
Quando regressei, fiz uma descoberta arrepiante: o descampado onde andava de skatem miúdo, nos Quatro Caminhos, foi ponto de passagem da Ciclone por Portugal. Nos anos 70 (ou assim).



Carla

16 DE AGOSTO DE 1990

Estou de partida. Até ao meu regresso, Dizzy! Espero que fiques fechado à minha espera. Mas, se alguém te ler, prefiro que continuem a fingir que não leram nada. Não quero saber. Quando voltar, conto-te tudo. Estou muito feliz!



Anabela

19 DE AGOSTO DE 1975

Vivemos a revolução do 25 de Abril.

A liberdade chegou ao país, que parece viver a sua adolescência – todos os dias uma nova surpresa revolucionária e, no entanto, nas cabeças ainda manda a «outra senhora»...

As tuas páginas, querido diário, lidas, rasuradas, censuradas pelo meu irmão – são a prova disso.

Imaginá-lo, sorrateiro, a remexer nas minhas coisas, à tua procura, depois a ler-te e a riscar-te as páginas – enche-me de nojo...

Nunca imaginei que alguém tivesse a ousadia de escancarar assim a minha intimidade. Muito menos o meu irmão.

A mesma pessoa que arranca do peito frases revolucionárias arranca do meu diário páginas que considera demasiado chocantes. E ainda diz que foi «censura em meu benefício»...

Na minha casa é óbvio que ainda vigora o antigo regime. Felizmente, na minha vida aconteceu uma revolução.

Nunca mais tive notícias do alemão. Ficou-me com a medalhinha da Senhora da Assunção e desapareceu. Nunca mais houve feiras por aqui. São mais festas populares: santa disto, santo daquilo, camarada, socialismo, liberdade...

Mas conheci um rapaz. Português. Gosto dele, divirto-me com ele.

A minha avó tem receio de nos deixar sozinhos. Ultimamente fala-me na importância de uma noiva que se guarda para o casamento. Guarda-se? Guarda-se onde, ao certo?! Numa gaveta?!



M.

7 DE DEZEMBRO DE 2000

Quando finalmente terminei a Ciclone, dirigi-me para o telefone a fim de avisar o meu pai. Estava orgulhoso. Não cabia em mim de contente. Mas o telefone começou a tocar antes mesmo de ter tempo de marcar o número. Era ele, o meu pai!

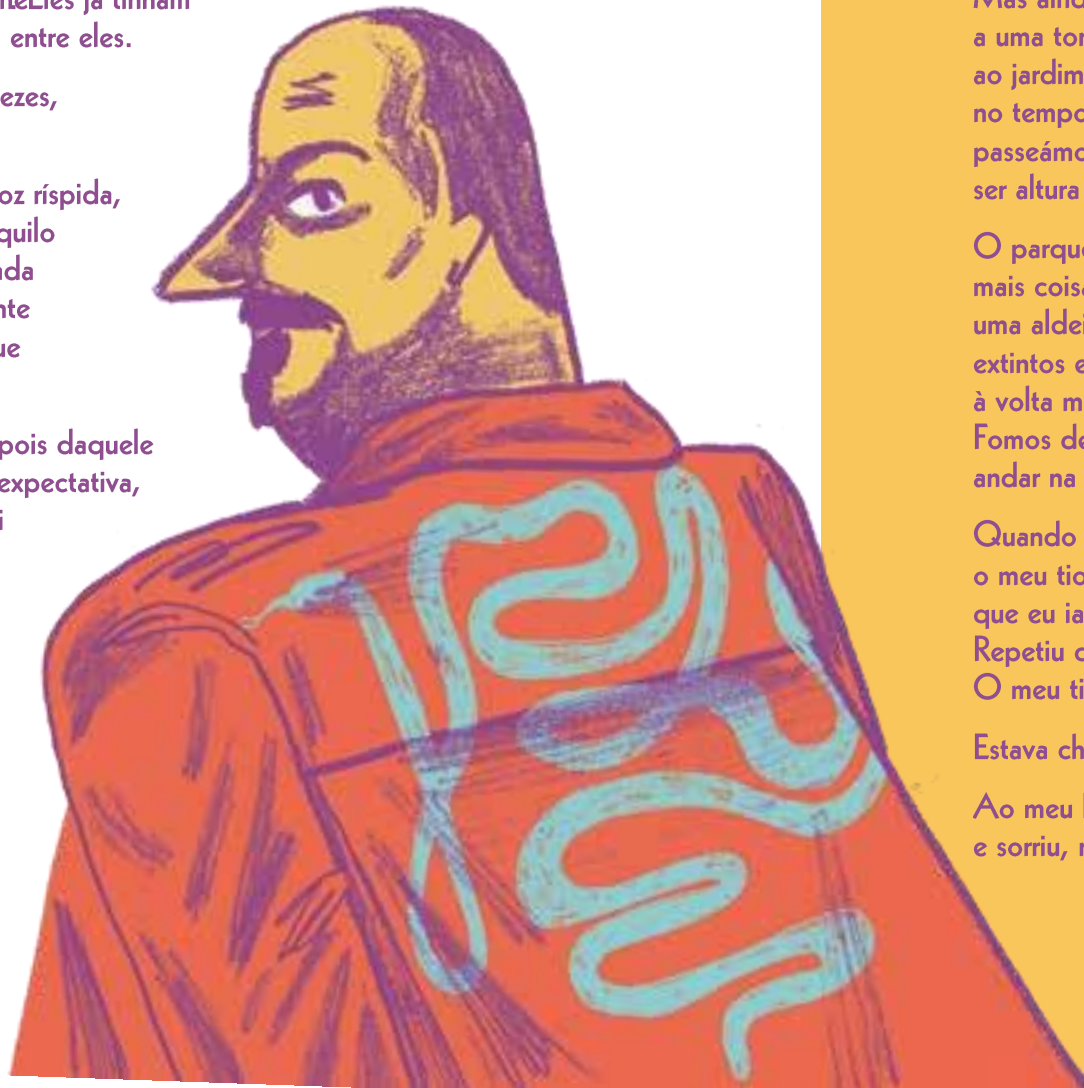
O que ele dizia não fazia sentido nenhum: eu tinha de desmanchar a Ciclone e reenviar as peças para a Alemanha, uma a uma. A primeira que deveria enviar era o eixo principal da montanha-russa. Eu só tinha de seguir as instruções de der DeutscheEles já tinham discutido e combinado tudo entre eles.

Tentei interrompê-lo várias vezes, mas ele estava determinado.

Nenhuma explicação, uma voz ríspida, nervosa, e ordens. Ia fazer aquilo aos poucos até não restar nada e podermos vender novamente o terreno do ex-futuro Parque de la Asunción.

Desligou. Fiquei furioso. Depois daquele investimento todo, daquela expectativa, íamos desistir?! O antigo rei da Albânia já tinha reinado os seus cinco dias e agora queria ir para casa?! Era isso?!

Não, não era isso.



Carla

2 DE SETEMBRO DE 1990

Dizzy, voltei.

Sabe-me bem estar em casa. Nunca pensei dizer isto, mas é verdade. O que tenho para te contar vai deixar-te completamente surpreendido, porque ninguém poderia imaginar o que me aconteceu em Berlim.

Tinha pensado trazer um bocadinho do Muro para guardar aqui, como memória, mas não consegui. É que entretanto aconteceu o acidente. Mas ainda deu para fazer muita coisa antes disso. Visitámos museus, subimos a uma torre altíssima de onde se tinha uma vista incrível da cidade, fomos ao jardim zoológico, visitámos um bairro de Leste que parecia congelado no tempo, vimos edifícios destruídos na Segunda Guerra Mundial, passeámos... Estava a ser muito intenso. Tão intenso que o meu tio decidiu ser altura de irmos passar o dia ao parque de diversões que eu queria visitar.

O parque é espetacular! É como se fosse uma Feira Popular, mas com muito mais coisas! Tem uma roda-gigante, um rio onde se pode passear nuns cisnes, uma aldeia inglesa medieval, uma zona com réplicas de dinossauros e animais extintos em tamanho real (acho), carrinhos de choque, carroséis que andam à volta muito rápido e a famosa montanha-russa de que te tinha falado. Fomos de manhã, almoçámos lá e deixámos a maior emoção para o fim: andar na Ciclone, a montanha-russa com 26 metros de altura.

Quando a vi, tive a certeza de que, afinal, não queria andar. Avisei logo o meu tio. Mas ele disse-me para não ser medrosa como a minha mãe. Insistiu que eu ia gostar, que era uma sensação incrível que eu não podia perder. Repetiu que aquela era a «minha» oportunidade. Foi então que cedi. O meu tio desejou-me boa viagem.

Estava cheia de medo. Tinha as lágrimas quase a rebentar.

Ao meu lado, sentou-se uma rapariga, mais nova que eu, que olhou para mim e sorriu, nervosa. Pensei que afinal não estava sozinha.

O meu tio acenou. O senhor que verificava os cintos debruçou-se sobre mim, para ver se estava tudo apertado. E eu reparei que ele tinha ao pescoço um fio com uma medalhinha da Nossa Senhora da Assunção. Mesmo! Uma medalhinha da Assunção. E pensei: é um sinal, está tudo bem, vai correr tudo bem. É que, quando eu era pequena, a minha mãe deu-me uma medalhinha muito parecida para que tudo corresse sempre bem. É uma tradição de família. Mas a minha mãe já perdeu a dela.

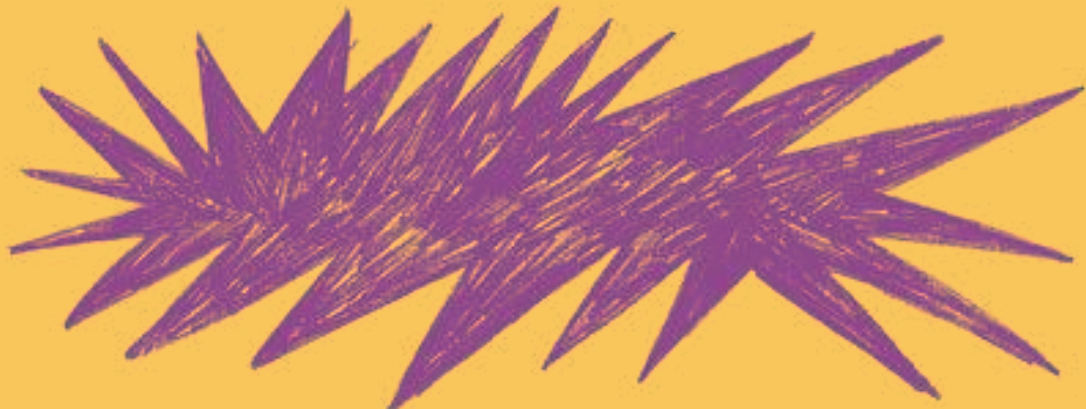
Então, a viagem começou.

O dia estava lindo. Fazia calor. Começámos com uma subida. Quando chegámos ao topo, olhei para baixo e o abismo era infernal! Fechei os olhos, sentia que estávamos a cair, era uma sensação tão real, nunca tinha experimentado nada assim.

Quando abri os olhos, vi que a miúda ao meu lado estava pálida de medo. Desatou a gritar. Aliás, toda a gente gritava!

Toda a gente menos eu. Eu estava em silêncio.

Íamos tão rápido, Dizzy! Inclinámo-nos para a direita e entrámos na segunda subida. Era depois disso que acontecia o looping



A miúda ao meu lado continuava a gritar e eu permanecia em silêncio. Tinha tanto medo que o meu corpo estava rígido. Eu não estava a viver aquilo. Eu estava ali a não querer viver aquilo. A carruagem entrou no looping começou a dar a volta e foi perdendo velocidade. De repente fez-se luz. Literalmente. Um clarão e...

Pendurados de cabeça para baixo, Dizzy, parados, presos pelos ombros e pela cintura, de cabeça para baixo. Não era normal ficar-se parado ali.

Mas nós ali estávamos, parados, de cabeça para baixo.

A pergunta: vou cair, vamos cair? Isto está preso? Vai aguentar? Vou morrer?

Olho para o lado: a miúda com os cabelos no ar, cara assustada, em silêncio. Reconheço aquele medo. Ela a não querer estar ali, a não querer dar a volta, era como eu na minha vida, a não querer estar ali, a não querer dar a volta.

A miúda cada vez mais corada, mais vermelha...

E de repente, escorregam-me do bolso as chaves de casa. Em queda livre, 26 metros, as minhas chaves de casa.

Abro a boca, começo a dizer qualquer coisa e...



Descemos vertiginosamente pelos carris, a viagem continua, eu nem acredito que a viagem está a continuar e cada pedaço que avançamos é um alívio, é uma alegria. Grito a plenos pulmões, a miúda ao meu lado ganha voz e grita também, eu estou viva, ela está viva, estamos vivas e a viagem continua!

Será que vamos chegar ao fim?, será que isto vai parar outra vez?, fecho os olhos, não paro de gritar, mas a carruagem para, ela já parou e eu continuo aos gritos.

Acordo no hospital em Berlim. Deram-me um calmante. O meu tio está ao meu lado. Diz que estou bem, que não me preocupe. Ele trata das questões legais. Queixas, seguros, indemnizações... Só posso viajar uma semana depois.

Quando cheguei, gritei. Quando vi a minha casa, gritei. Quando entrei no meu quarto, gritei. E vou gritar sempre a partir de agora. Gosto de gritar. Lembro-me dos de Leste aos gritos a atravessar o Muro para Oeste. Grito porque sou finalmente ocidental. O Muro caiu! O Muro caiu!



Anabela

25 DE AGOSTO DE 1975

Querido diário,

As tuas páginas devassadas pelo meu irmão lembram-me que há um pide à espreita atrás de cada porta. Entre os receios da minha avó e as denúncias do meu irmão, muito pouco espaço me sobra. Ou desisto de ti, ou...

Não, este é um ato de resistência.

A partir de agora, escrevo em alemão quando for preciso, já?
Caso vás novamente parar às mãos erradas...

Ist es klar? Verstehst du was ich meine? Ja?

Este fim de semana, os avós foram à terra. Eu disse que não queria ir. Como o meu irmão decidiu ficar, a minha avó deixou. Mas o meu irmão foi a mais uma manifestação com os colegas da universidade e eu fiquei sozinha com o meu... Schätz...

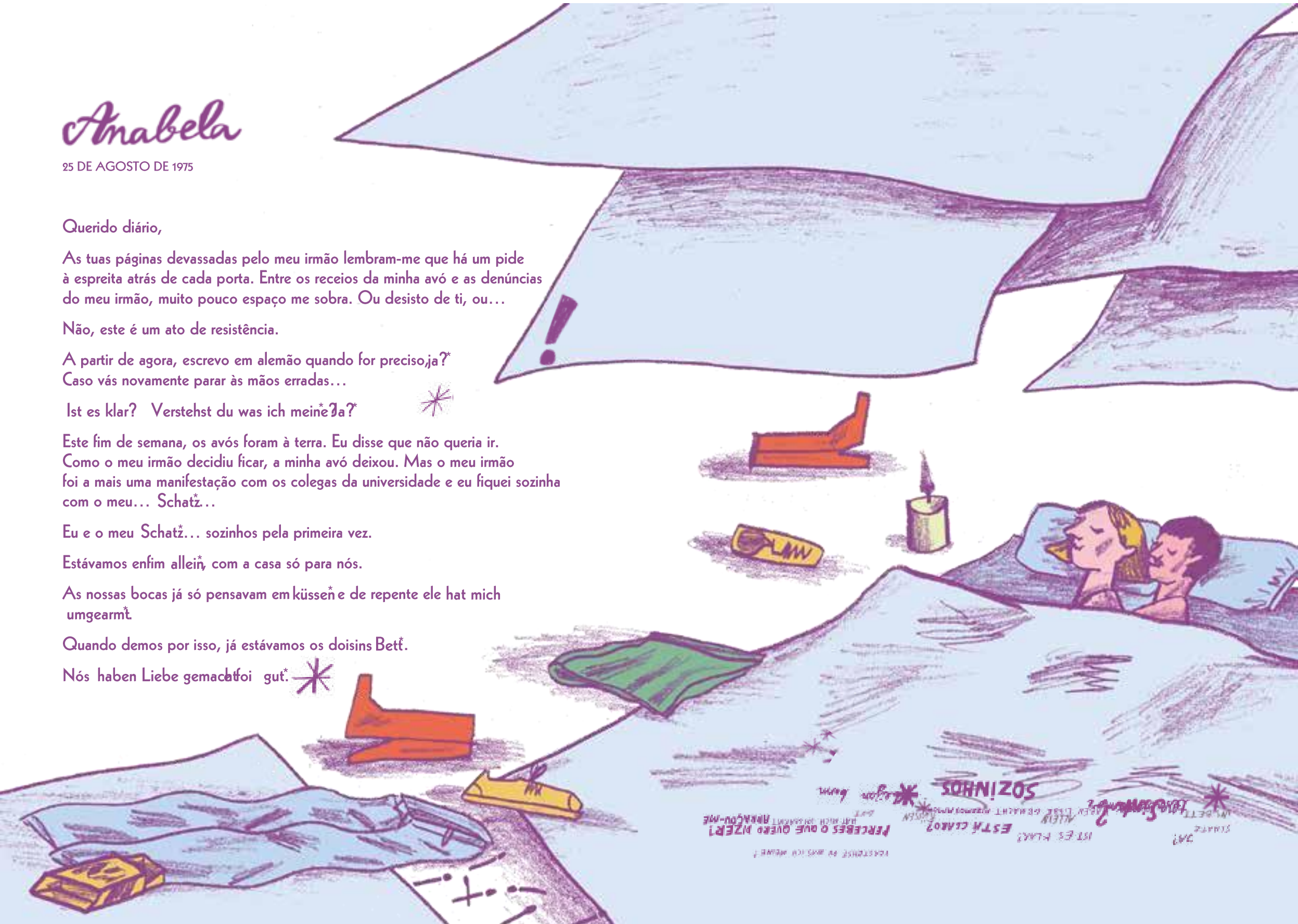
Eu e o meu Schätz... sozinhos pela primeira vez.

Estávamos enfim allein*, com a casa só para nós.

As nossas bocas já só pensavam em küssen* e de repente ele hat mich umgearmt*.

Quando demos por isso, já estávamos os dois ins Bett*.

Nós haben Liebe gemacht* foi gut*.





M.

31 DE DEZEMBRO DE 2000

No dia em que me trouxeram para aqui, o cabelo da minha mãe ficou todo branco e ela entrou na menopausa. Ela entrou na menopausa à força, e eu saí da adolescência à força.

A minha mãe mandou-me uma fotografia de nós os dois, antes de tudo ter acontecido, e diz que devo lembrar-me de nós os dois assim. Eu, adolescente, e ela, a sorrir, com ar de minha irmã mais velha. Uma fotografia tirada mesmo antes de sairmos de Berlim.

Amanhã entro no primeiro dia do ano três. No final de tudo isto, terão sido vinte anos da minha vida. O meu pai sai hoje em liberdade. Cumprimos ambos dois anos de prisão. Eu cá, ele na Alemanha. Estamos em igualdade de circunstâncias na pena cumprida até agora, apesar de a mim ainda me faltarem dezoito anos para cumprir.

Pai, decidi enviar-te esta carta, com a minha história por escrito, para que tu, Herdeiro do Antigo Rei da Albânia, não inventes outra história em que todos acreditem, à força de a repetires. A minha história, conto-a eu.

Quero que saibas que eu já não sou um rapaz e que tu já não és o meu herói. De herói passaste a vilão. Sem meio-termo, subitamente, como o cabelo branco da mãe.

Cento e sessenta e sete quilos de cocaína no eixo da Ciclone ditaram o fim da minha adolescência.

Vinte anos de cadeia em Lima. Numa das piores prisões da América Latina.

Tenho pensado muito sobre a nossa história e sobre o que nos aconteceu.

Perante vinte anos de cadeia, a minha vida parece ter passado num segundo.
Observo tudo como se percorresse em câmara lenta o disparo de uma pistola.

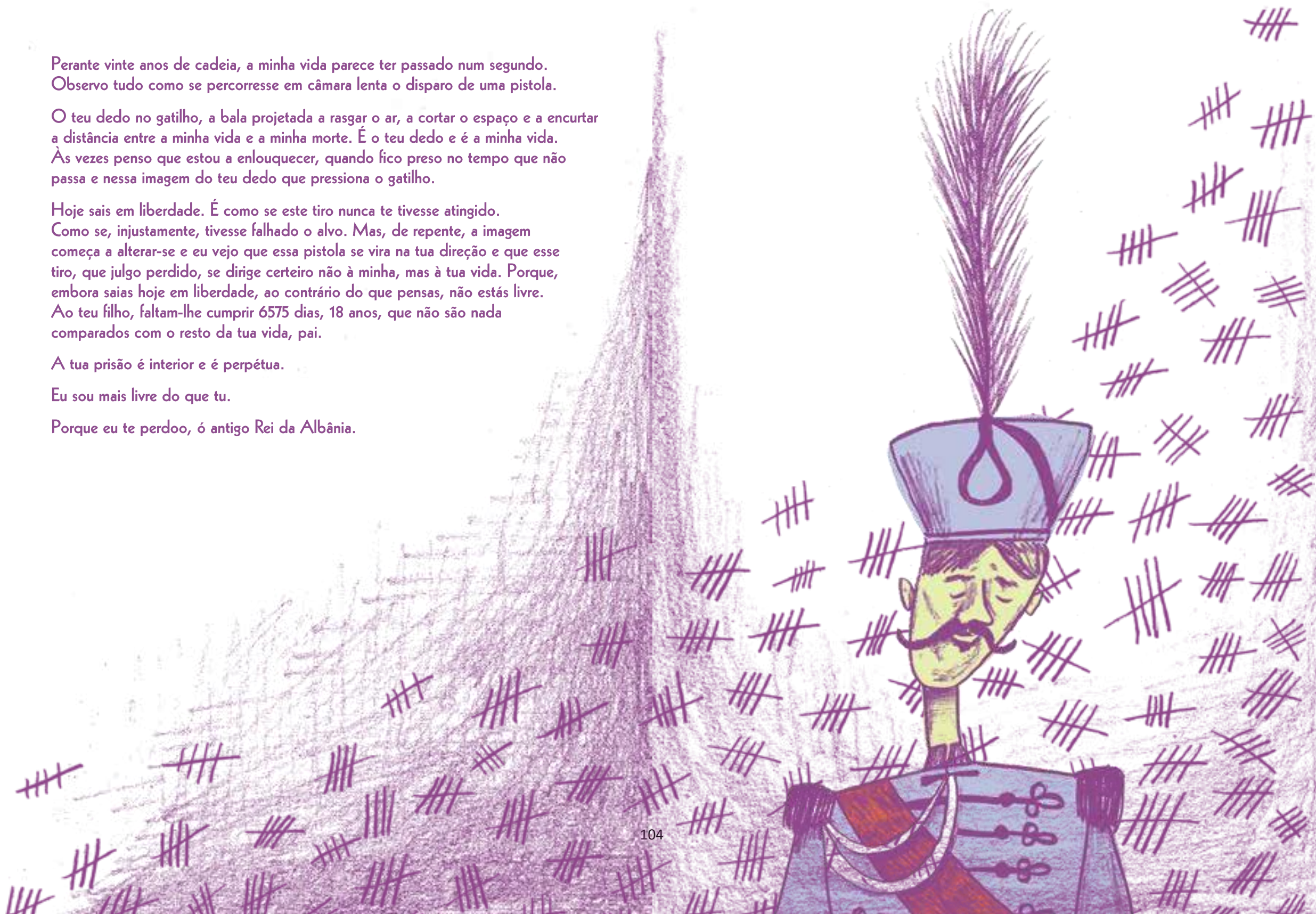
O teu dedo no gatilho, a bala projetada a rasgar o ar, a cortar o espaço e a encurtar a distância entre a minha vida e a minha morte. É o teu dedo e é a minha vida.
Às vezes penso que estou a enlouquecer, quando fico preso no tempo que não passa e nessa imagem do teu dedo que pressiona o gatilho.

Hoje saís em liberdade. É como se este tiro nunca te tivesse atingido.
Como se, injustamente, tivesse falhado o alvo. Mas, de repente, a imagem começa a alterar-se e eu vejo que essa pistola se vira na tua direção e que esse tiro, que julgo perdido, se dirige certo não à minha, mas à tua vida. Porque, embora saias hoje em liberdade, ao contrário do que pensas, não estás livre.
Ao teu filho, faltam-lhe cumprir 6575 dias, 18 anos, que não são nada comparados com o resto da tua vida, pai.

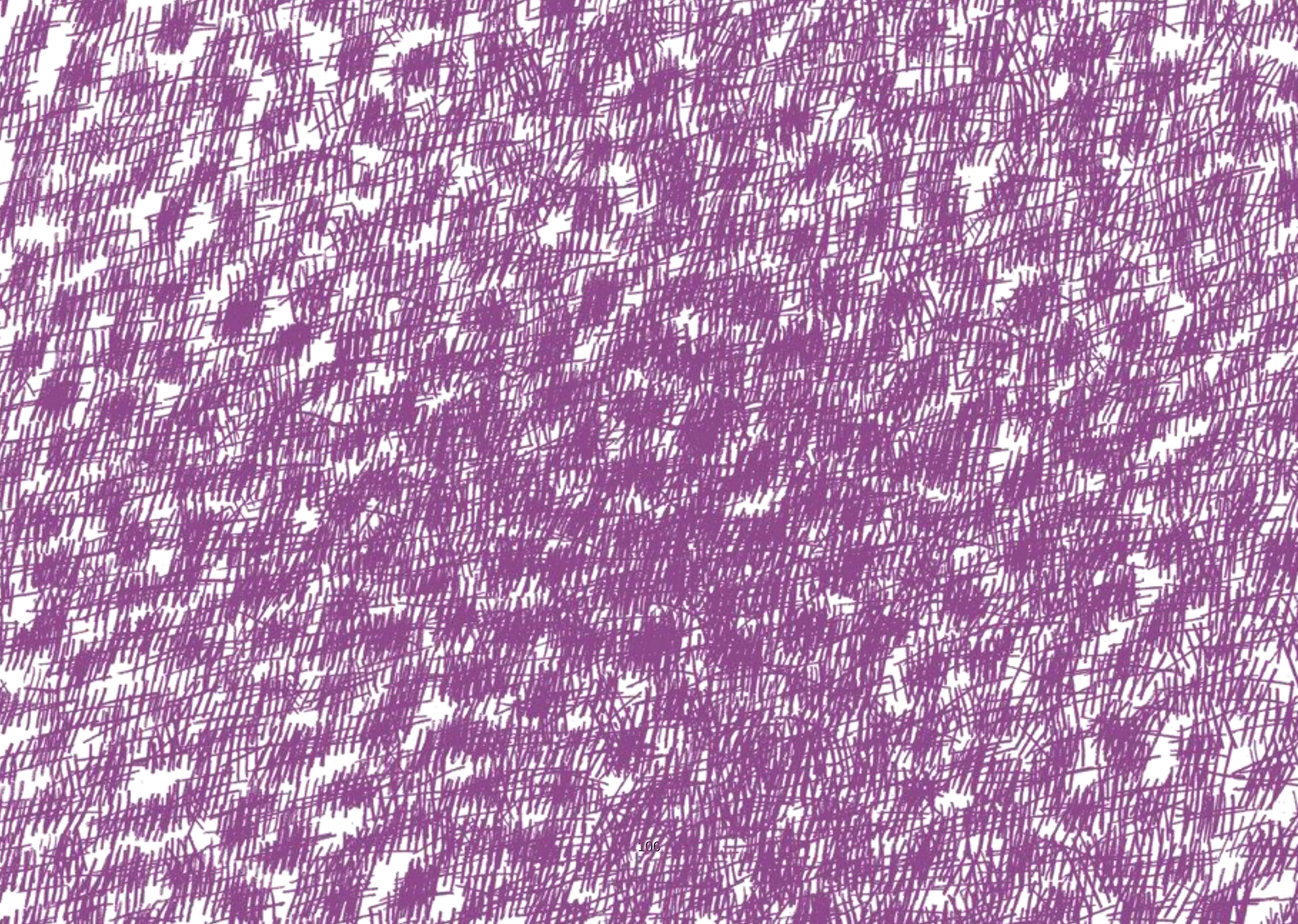
A tua prisão é interior e é perpétua.

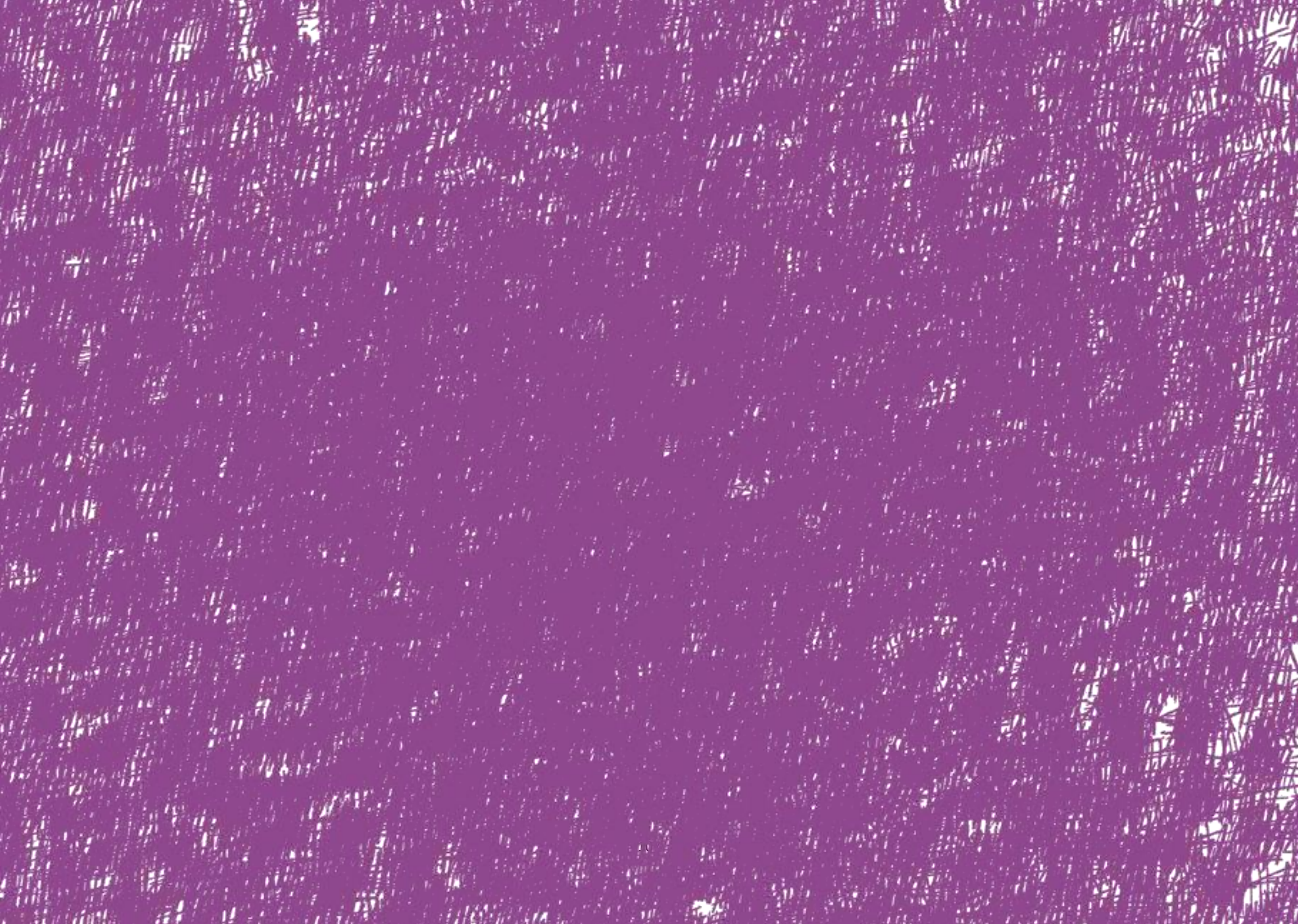
Eu sou mais livre do que tu.

Porque eu te perdoo, ó antigo Rei da Albânia.









The illustration is a surreal, hand-drawn style artwork. On the left, a large, dark, textured figure of a person stands with their head replaced by a bright, glowing sphere. A yellow roller coaster track winds across the scene, starting from the bottom left, looping through the center, and ending in a circular loop on the right that contains a dollar sign. The background is a dark, textured purple. In the foreground, there are stylized, dark green palm trees and cacti. The overall mood is mysterious and symbolic.

Bernardo

VERDADE OU CONSEQUÊNCIA

Estou aqui, em Lima, por causa da descoberta que fiz em Berlim.

O parque de Berlim encerrou depois de um incidente com a montanha-russa que já lá não está, a Ciclone. Um jornal alemão fez desse episódio primeira página. A família que geria o parque mudou-se para aqui, para Lima, para abrir o Parque de la Asunción, com as atrações que vinham de barco. Esse parque nunca chegou a abrir as portas ao público.

Numa reviravolta inesperada, é descoberta uma quantidade enorme de cocaína escondida numa das peças da Ciclone. Dois dos elementos da família são presos: o pai na Alemanha, e o filho no Peru.

Mas a Ciclone está aqui, praticamente completa. Falta-lhe apenas uma peça: o eixo central que lhe assegura estabilidade. O parque está interditado.

Anabela

30 DE AGOSTO DE 1975

Já fiz tanta coisa pela primeira vez!

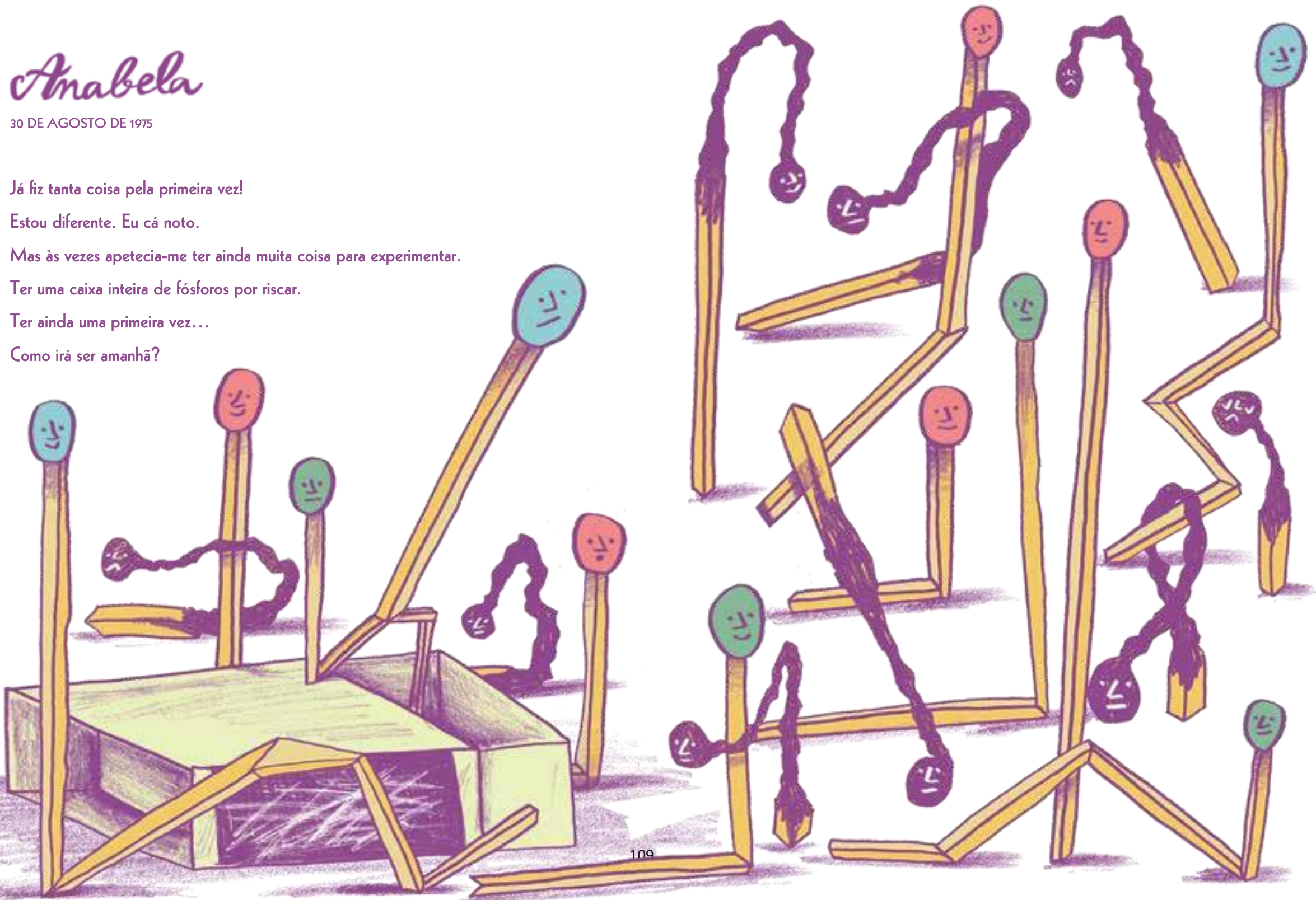
Estou diferente. Eu cá noto.

Mas às vezes apetecia-me ter ainda muita coisa para experimentar.

Ter uma caixa inteira de fósforos por riscar.

Ter ainda uma primeira vez...

Como irá ser amanhã?



Bernardo

LIVE @ PARQUE DE LA ASUNCIÓN

Estou em frente aos portões do parque fantasma. Consigo ver a silhueta da Ciclone a poucos metros. É um verdadeiro monstro de ferro e aço. Há arame farpado em torno do parque.

Estou cá dentro.

Vejo atrações semiconcluídas. Puzzles gigantes incompletos. Algumas estão grafitadas e parecem vandalizadas. Há vegetação por todo o lado. Ruídos estranhos fazem crer que há animais escondidos em todos os recantos.

Aproximo-me da Ciclone.

A estrutura parece estar muito danificada. Sinto-a mover-se com o vento. Um enorme castelo feito de fósforos. É realmente impressionante.

Risco absoluto.

Vou começar a subir.

Sigo por um trilho de segurança paralelo aos carris, mas não me podia sentir mais inseguro.

Cada pedaço de madeira que piso range. Vou com atenção máxima... Há degraus em falta e bocados de corrimão que desapareceram. Está tudo coberto de musgo.

Apesar de as atrações lá em baixo estarem vandalizadas, o único sinal de vandalismo na Ciclone é o da natureza. Não há sinais de que alguém tenha tentado a loucura de subir à montanha-russa. Vou ser o primeiro.

Estou a meio da grande subida. Tudo balança cada vez mais.

Apoio-me nos carris para olhar lá para baixo.

Continuar a subir: agarro-me ao corrimão com mais força ainda.



Está cada vez mais frio, mais húmido. Sinto o vento. Forte. Tudo range e balança. A qualquer instante, o castelo de fósforos pode desabar. Mas eu não vou voltar para trás.

Estou no topo da Ciclone. Consegui! Vinte e seis metros de altura.

Estou cá em cima!

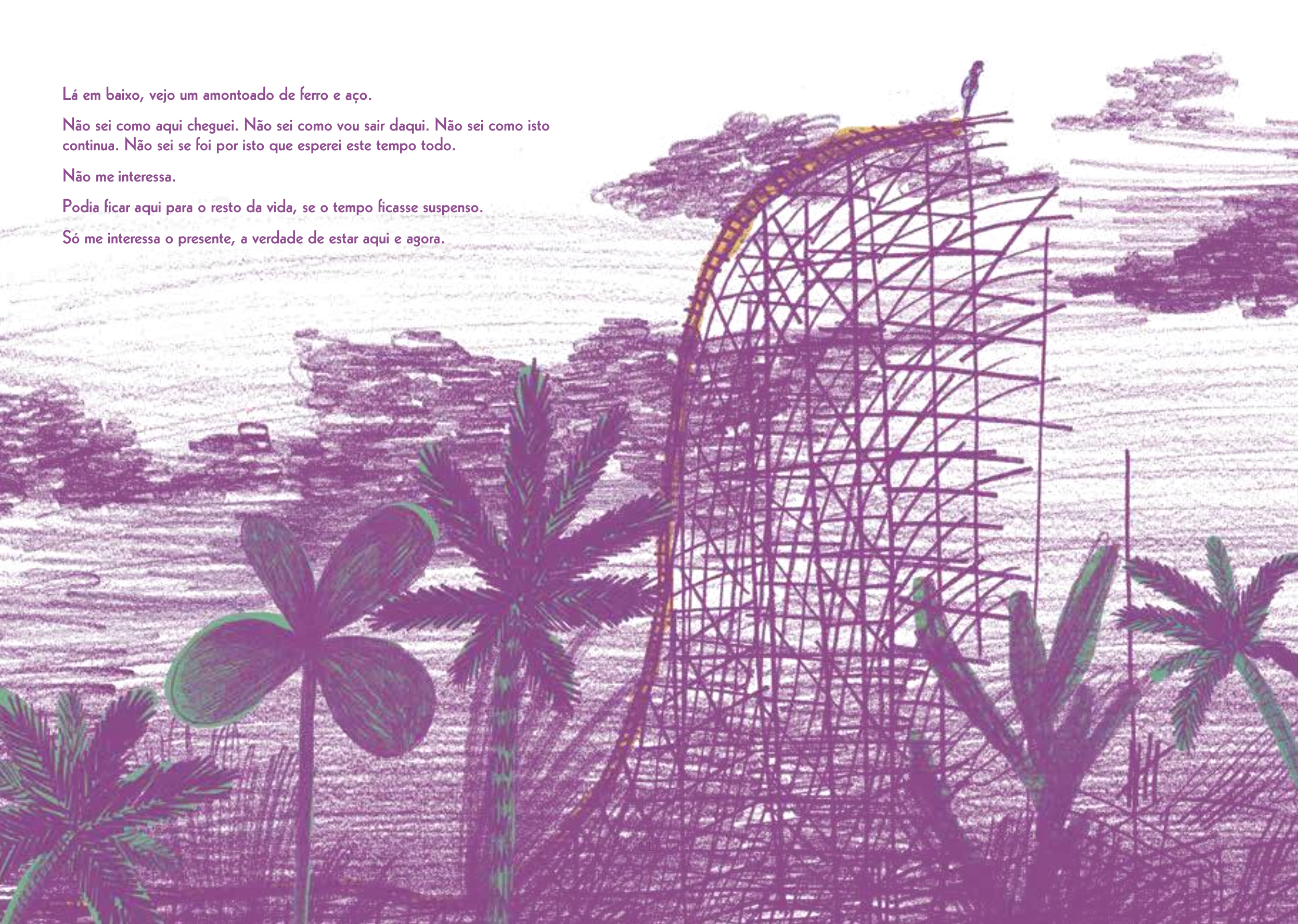
Lá em baixo, vejo um amontoado de ferro e aço.

Não sei como aqui cheguei. Não sei como vou sair daqui. Não sei como isto continua. Não sei se foi por isto que esperei este tempo todo.

Não me interessa.

Podia ficar aqui para o resto da vida, se o tempo ficasse suspenso.

Só me interessa o presente, a verdade de estar aqui e agora.





M.

Porque é que
o tempo não
passa?

ANABELA

Querido
diário,
vou fazer
uma
loucura!

CARLA

Só me apetece
ficar em casa.
Só me apetece
comer e dormir.

BERNARDO

Próximo
destino:
América
Latina!

Ele é
alemão
e tem
24 anos.

